

DUKE



JUNE 1957

50c

FICTION BY

CHESTER HIMES

RAY BRADBURY

LANGSTON HUGHES

ERSKINE CALDWELL





HIMES



DAVIS



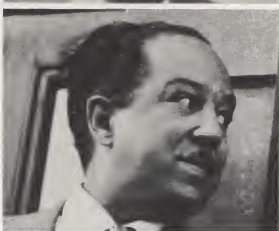
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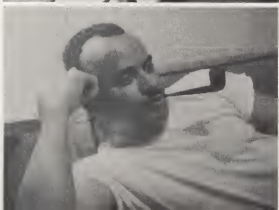
FISHER



HUGHES



CORTOR



FOR ITS tremulous debut in the world of letters, DUKE has been well fortified with a literary lineup that spells all-star in any league. And it is our hopeful ambition to keep up the high level of talent on these pages which will be devoted in coming months to a simple but dedicated resolve—to provide reading entertainment in the world of color. DUKE will strive to cater to the sophisticated, urbane tastes of our Ivy-minded males who have advanced fully enough so that virility is more than a word and adult truly connotes manhood in all its glories. We have no causes and no axes to grind except to bring moments of pleasure to h-men and their female friends of like mind with an amusing, delightful package of assorted goodies, ranging from top-notch fiction to the pinup lovelies placed on display in our "Duchess Of The Month" department each issue.

To that end we have enlisted the creative efforts of such blunt-writing novelists as Chester Himes and William Fisher. Himes, who makes his home in Brooklyn, Cleveland or Paris as his whim suggests, is best known for such best sellers as "If He Hollers Let Him Go" and "The Third Generation" as well as short stories in *Esquire* and *Coronet*. Fisher is a New York newsman whose novel, "The Waiters," captured fully the feel of Harlem life. Illustrating his story is remarkably-talented Eldzier Cortor, onetime Chicagoan now making his home in Greenwich Village. His work has been reproduced in *Life* and shown in leading museums.

Langston Hughes, who wrote the ludicrous "Golden Brown," has been called dean of Negro writers in America by virtue of some 20 books published since the 20's. Another writing giant is George S. Schuyler, whose rapier wit is on display in his article on the drinking and sex habits of our brethren. Regular columnist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, he is author of a novel, "Black No More," as well as several *Reader's Digest* articles.

Two topnotchers in the fiction field in this issue are famed Erskine Caldwell, whose books have sold more copies than any living author. His "August Afternoon" is a brilliant satire on Dixie morals and mores. Ray Bradbury is rated the foremost science fiction writer in the land and his "The Last White Man" is a witty excursion into the world of space. A top movie writer, Bradbury did the screen story of "Moby Dick."

In its initial issue DUKE is happy to place on display the photographic talents of Elroy Davis, who did the color shots of "Duchess" Eleanor Crews, the pretty who adorns our cover and regales our readers in the center spread. Davis is a show business veteran as a singer in such musicals as "Carmen Jones" and "Lost In The Stars." Taking to the camera, he demonstrates his remarkable versatility in glamorizing the fair sex.

DUKE

JUNE 1957

VOL. I NO. 1



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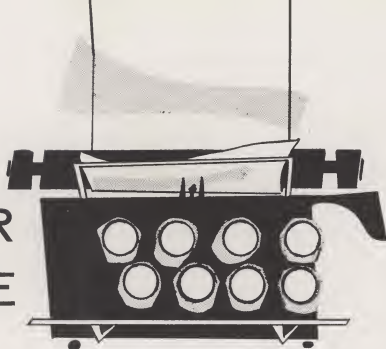
DAN BURLEY, editor

LEROY WINBUSH, art director

SYLVESTRE C. WATKINS, circulation director

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DEAR DUKE



New Magazine Idea

Here's my congratulations to you for entering the magazine field with a brand new idea. I had one back in the 1930s which your editor, Dan Burley, should remember. It was called "It Magazine" and we got it out for quite a while in Harlem and it did well until the war forced us out. Point I'm making is that ours was a new idea such as yours and I hope you keep it going.

The magazine field is still sufficiently new for more good publishing ideas than are on the stands and to me, the idea of a men's magazine for Negroes shouldn't have any trouble at all moving off the stands.

Fritz Pollard, Sr.
New York, N. Y.

I really feel that you have hit upon a wonderful idea in a Negro Esquire or Playboy inasmuch as you are launching a brand new type of magazine in the Negro field—and with Dan Burley as its editor-in-chief . . . DUKE's success is assured!

Needless to say, it will be a pleasure for me personally to give you every cooperation towards contributing to the success of DUKE.

Joe Glaser, President
Associated Booking Corp.
New York, N. Y.

Congratulations on your idea for a new men's magazine. Such a publication has been badly needed for a long time and I am certain it will set a fast pace in the male world of literary entertainment. Best wishes for continued success.

Atty. Euclid Louis Taylor
Chicago, Ill.

My hat is off to you for coming out with a live, up-to-date, entertaining men's magazine like DUKE. Now the men in "Smart Affairs" will be able to compete with the chattering female members of the troupe who burn our ears with talk about Fath and Dior creations.

I am also delighted, since it has been my life's work, to learn that you are intent on glorifying the beautiful Negro woman without being risqué. Sightsee-

ing is for sissies but the he-man likes something left to the imagination. Best wishes for SRO at the newsstands.

Larry Steele
Producer, "Smart Affairs of 1957"
Italian Village
San Francisco, Calif.

I was delighted to hear about the plans for publication of DUKE magazine, and even more pleased to know that it will be in Dan Burley's eminently capable hands. I am sure there is room, in the present-day market for periodicals, to accommodate a publication of this kind. In wishing DUKE the best of success, I should like to add that I am reasonably sure this wish will come true. Lots of luck.

Leonard Feather
New York, N. Y.

Congratulations on your new magazine for men. This is something that should have happened a long time ago.

Jimmy Payne
Chicago, Ill.

It's about time somebody started what you're actually doing. The field has been ripe for a Negro monthly magazine for a long, long time and I, for one, sincerely hope your Duke will fill the void. The best of luck to you on what I hope will be a long and successful voyage.

Jesse Owens
Illinois Youth Commission
Chicago, Ill.

Disc Jockeys Write

Congratulations! It's been too long since someone realized the potential in the Negro market and took the initiative to give colored people suitable recognition. I believe your monthly answers this demand.

Bill Dwyer
Station WHAM
Rochester, New York

Man, I think you've hit on it. DUKE should be a great success, in fact at the end of the trail you should find a bundle of loot. Good luck to you and your associate cats.

Jim Wychor
General Manager
Radio Station KLGa
Algonia, Iowa

I am not the good samaritan type, but I think there is a great need for your type of magazine. Most Negro magazines lack greatly in being sophisticated, so therefore, DUKE should sell like the proverbial hot cakes. I am sure that the magazine will be done in taste.

John Warner (Daddi-O)
Station WCYN
Cynthiana, Ky.

Duke Tradition

Here's hoping you really become a Duke in the Duke Ellington tradition because with a name like that, I just know you're going to be the best jazz magazine on the market.

Roy Henderson
Washington, D. C.

I'm a soldier attached to an outfit down here in the heart of this Georgia, and man, if you haven't been in the service in Georgia, you'll never know what they put on you. Our only kids come from reading colored magazines and newspapers and there have never been enough of them. Hope yours will be as good as it sounds for you'll get yourself a whole lot of colored GI loot each month. Luck to you.

Bill Bumpus
Fort Benning, Ga.

I've got a couple of chicks out here I'd bet are the prettiest you'll find anywhere. Want to bet? I'm sending you their pictures under separate cover. I want to see them in Duke right away. If I don't, you'll never get any more of my money.

Johnny Higgins
Sacramento, Calif.

When I first heard you were planning an all-men's magazine, I didn't believe it. I've heard so many rumors about new Negro magazines and none of them materialized, so I just wrote this latest one off as another false alarm. Now that I know you're coming out, you can bet my office will have copies around for my patients. It's time we had a Negro Playboy-Esquire type magazine of our own.

Dr. Eugene Mason,
Chicago, Ill.

If you do only one thing—print some pretty chicks' pictures and give their addresses. You've got my money each month with your new magazine.

Charles Aikens
Baltimore, Md.

So you fellows are putting out a new colored magazine. Well, that sounds good but if you are going to fill it up with a lot of civil rights stories and things about white people keeping colored people down, you'd just as well stop right now. People are getting tired of that kind of stuff. In fact, I've quit buying colored magazines just because they always give you the bad side of things and we've had too much of that already. Otherwise, I wish you the best of luck.

Jesse Crouch,
Newark, N. J.



DUKE STEPS OUT

The Hairless Ones

SHOCKED at first, the high brown beauties of Chicago's Westside have had a roaring buzz in their libidos ever since the dapper young Ivy Leaguers of the mambo and cha-cha set came up with their heads shaven clean in a new hairless style called "The Yul Brynner."

The Hollywood star of "The King and I" was getting too many oohs and aahs with his shining pate for the youngsters to ignore. They hid themselves to the barbershops and had their ears raised a good two inches as every strand hit the floor. The process pomades gave way to plain petroleum jelly that leaves the knowledge bumps as bright and shiny as fresh tomatoes.

Watermelon John

AS THE warm breezes caressed the pallid skins of the winter-weary from far-away New York and Chicago and the bangtails paid short odds at Oaklawn, the faithful who make their way to Hot Springs each year sat in the sun before famous old Pythian Bathhouse and talked about the perennial champion of the jockeys of the galloping dominoes.

In town on one of his now-infrequent visits to the Arkansas spa was the king of the black-seeded sweetmeat of Dixie, Watermelon John of Texas, whose vast plantations provide the delicious delicacies sold over the counters of many of the nation's A & P store. John lamented the absence of Bubber Payne, owner of the Casino night club and gaming rooms, who is currently sitting out an engagement in one of Uncle Sam's homes for the tax delinquent, but gave the kibitzers an eyeful of his psychological control of the dotted cubes when he prayed, moaned, blinked, grunted, pinched, rubbed and finally tossed the dice for \$18,000 on a single roll, and true to form, was set out a winner.

One of the most fabulous of the famed gamblers like Tampa Red, Mr. Gentleman, Race Riot, Bubber Payne and others who have kept the green velvet tables of Hot Springs well worn for more than two decades, Watermelon John found the spa exactly to his liking this year, except for the shortage of faders.

Gambling had been on the q-t in Hot Springs for over five years until one Monday night early in the six-week season this Spring when the doors suddenly opened and the lights in the back rooms blazed brazenly. It meant that ofay night club trade from the bigger bathhouses who came down to Malvern Avenue to see the female impersonators' show in the Town Tavern, hear the blues in the Casino or watch the sunrise through the drawn blinds of Kitty's bar would have to stay away. But the gamblers were betting that the new open-door policy would mean more to the local habitués than the booze business.

To watch Watermelon John roll the cubes is an experience in itself. When the stakes are high, he may take as long as 20 minutes to turn 'em loose. He sits them down, pushes them around, tosses them into his cupped left hand. He rattles them against his ear, cocks his head to the side and listens attentively, moans a little and grunts audibly. He prays aloud and talks affectionately to the dice; then, when fader, houseman and all the nervous eyeballers have been worked up to proper pitch, John cuts them loose—an easy, even, unhurried roll that bounces the dice gently off the padded sides of the table to trinkle to a fortune-making halt.

His bets this year were limited by the financial strength of his not-too-numerous competitors, but Watermelon John, a standing legend in the Southwest, has been known to pit his year's take from his plantations on the tables and win or lose up to \$75,000 in a season.

After-Hours Joints

JOINTS in Harlem remain open by legal permission until 4 a.m., which by all considerations should be time enough for the whole town to get drunk and get home in time to get some sleep the rest of the morning. But people there are contrary. Although many night clubs feature good music and floor shows with pretty girls, most folks wait until after everything is supposed to be closed down before calling taxicabs or heading their cars up the avenue for the illegal places that operate after hours.

After-hours joints have been big business in Harlem since the days of Barron Wilkins at 134th and Seventh and Gold Grabbin's over on Lenox near 135th. During Prohibition days the necessity for such places could be explained and they operated boldly as speakeasies, many with floor shows and other entertainment. A lot of people remember the days or nights in West 133rd Street when you piled in Dickie Wells', Pods 'n' Jerrie's Log Cabin or went over on St. Nicholas Ave. to Julian's to hear the great piano duels of Art Tatum, Willie (The Lion) Smith, Lucky Roberts and James P. Johnson. Before the sun came up, perhaps the whole shebang would shift over to Mom's celebrated flat on Lenox in the 140s, there to whale away until 11 or 12 noon.

Some of the more fabulous after hours spots were those masterminded by man-about-town-at-night Johnny Walker. He masqueraded the joint that occupied a four-story brownstone at 765 St. Nicholas Ave. under the innocuous name of "Young Men's Heights Association" and issued "membership" cards by the bushel to an assortment of Harlem bartenders, glamour girls, pimps, numbers runners, policemen, and prizefighters. There were times at Johnny Walker's when a person couldn't move because of the press of people around him. Whiskey was passed from the bar hand to hand high over the crowd to the purchaser over near

the door. Sometimes he never got it nor the bartender his money.

It was at Johnny Walker's that Art Tatum was several times told to get up from the piano because the club entertainers headed by veteran night club dancer and singer Boots Marshall had a party of "live ones" ready to pay to hear their naughty songs. Tatum stopped going there.

Today, after-hours joints in Harlem and elsewhere in New York are as dead as coffin nails. The clampdown order went into effect following the shooting episode in the 710 Club operated by Johnny Dancer. In that scrape, Billy Daniels was accused of putting a slug into the shoulder of fight club character and sportsman James Jackson during an argument over which was the greater lover man. Rumors that \$10,000 had passed into the hands of the cops in turn for having the pistol used in the shooting "get lost" resulted in the order from the commissioner's office to shut down after-hours spots and keep them shut. But the legitimate club operators didn't profit. Seems that the after-hours club followers are a separate breed. They spend their money in illegal places or not at all.

Blues in E-Flat

HIS NAME is Odell Rand and he stands quite a few inches under five feet. He's distinctive in jazz because he's perhaps the only musician around today playing pop tunes on an E-flat clarinet. All musicians know that you play E-flat and A-flat clarinets in brass marching bands, symphonic ensembles and occasionally in classic chamber groups. You don't play jazz on 'em. But Odell Rand, who started off on the instrument when he was far shorter and younger than he is today, has never switched to the more conventional C or B-flat stick. Neither does he play saxophone. He just sticks with that E-flat and blows, man, blows.

His name ordinarily would be meaningless in jazz circles had it not been for his singular service from 1930 to 1940 with a Chicago group rejoicing in the name of the Harlem Hamfats. The Hamfats, since dispersed, made over 100 sides on the Decca label and enjoyed a long run of popularity with those *aficionados* of the blues motif who go for the actionable beat. Odell, now 51 and playing with a trio around Chicago night spots, gave the Hamfats that curious tone with that E-flat clarinet of his which makes the records so hard-to-find collector's items. Many jazz enthusiasts may remember Rand for his contribution to Rosetta Howard's memorable "If You're a Viper" platter that sold nearly a million copies in 1937.

Rand, who started his musical career in the later Major N. Clark Smith's Chicago Wendell Phillips High School band, was handed the E-flat instrument at the same time drums were given to Big Sid Catlett and Lionel Hampton. Others in the Clark band included Oscar Hinton, former Lena Horne bassist; Scovall Brown, B-flat clarinet wizard well-known in Greenwich Village jazz

life; trombonist Trummy Young, and trumpeter George Dixon. But Odell Rand, somehow or the other, never rose above his stint with the Hamfats, although fellow musicians agree that what he does with his odd clarinet is the "most beautiful jazz you'll ever hear anywhere." He makes his stick at times sound almost like a violin, then suddenly drops into the guttural growls of an Arkansas early morning house rent shuffle that actually tickles the feet and makes a guy want to dance or—make love. Badly.

Booze "Meter Miser"

IN CHICAGO, they're in a dither about the newest innovation at a near South Side tavern called the B & M Glass Bar. Seems that the owner, tired of losing so much money on his whiskey, decided to take an ultra-radical step to clamp down on over-generous bartenders or those who poured with a calculating look in their eyes. The boss installed the new (to Chicago) "meter miser" device on every bottle of whiskey, wine, rum and gin in the joint and today proudly points to his layout behind the bar as the latest development in what he calls "self protection."

In a way, it protects the customer, too, because he can watch his glass being filled by the automatic device which even measures the drops of each drink. The deal also involves a mathematical equation in which the cash register tape is compared with what's left in the bottle. If they match up, the bartender keeps his job. If the cash register totals more loot than whiskey sold, he's a candidate for the board of directors. But if the register is short and the whiskey's gone, then so is the bartender.

Ayem Is Not Star Time

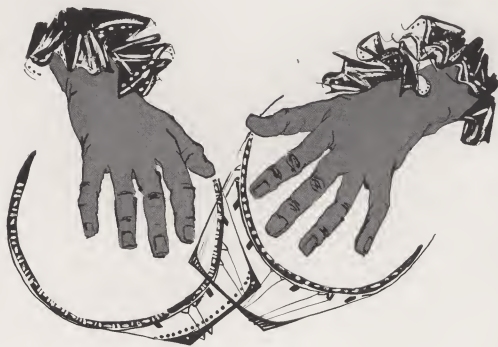
THE OTHER DAY we wanted to talk on the phone with bandleader Count Basie who had come to town by bus to fill a local night club engagement. The Basie bus had unloaded, we later found out, around 6 a.m. the morning

we called his hotel. We had expected to be told that "Mr. Basie is not to be disturbed until 4 p.m." or that "Mr. Basie is asleep. Would you care to leave a message?" when we telephoned him at 12:30 p.m. But we had no trouble at all in getting him promptly and we didn't even have to announce ourselves by name. Basie said he was getting ready to go downtown to "shake some hands" in various offices and places. Bandleaders do such things, you know, in order to keep the old popularity up to scratch.

But on the other hand, we know from past experience, how rough it is to go fishing on the phone during the day and land, say a Sammy Davis, Jr., a Duke Ellington, a Harry Belafonte or a Lena Horne right off. For the stars have different sleeping habits following a night of work or on the town. Some are, like Sarah Vaughan, Dinah Washington and Cab Calloway, early risers. Others like the Duke, Belafonte and Lena Horne, are hard to get to.

There are several reasons for this. One, the most obvious, is that they're really bushed and require a certain number of sleeping hours to be ready for the next night. Another is that so many people are chasing after Ellington, Belafonte and Sammy Davis that they leave word at the switchboard not to be disturbed until as late as 5 or 6 p.m. You can't for instance, get Sammy Davis on the phone until after 5 o'clock for love or money. And the guy is actually sleeping, too! Both Sammy and Belafonte have their phones "stuffed" to cut off the small army of amateur songwriters, autograph hunters and those hunting handouts.

Often they're actually wide awake and out of bed as early as 1 o'clock in the afternoon—to their personal pals, managers, agents, disc jockeys and press relations people. But you try and get in to them! Being a golf bug, Sarah Vaughan gets up and out some mornings as early as 8:30. Duke Ellington is actually asleep, however, and you can hear his rumbling breathing as he advises his closest chum: "Say, man, I'm still sleeping. Call me back after 3."



Tavern Names

SOME strange names adorn taverns and restaurants in towns across the country. In Harlem, for example, there's one on Fifth Avenue known as the "Honey Dripper" restaurant. The name, no doubt, came from the hit recording, "The Honey Dripper," cut by Joe Ligins back in the mid-1940s. This seems to have been eclipsed by the "Bebop liquor store" on Chicago's South Side. Chicago also has the "Butterfly Inn" and the "Ice Plant" Tavern.

Biggest Nitery

IT'S BEEN almost a score of years since the heyday of the so-called black and tans, those booming joints on the darker side of town where whites came for adventure and excitement. We always felt that the reason they faded from the night life picture was that night-clubbing in colored areas became so routine for so many white folks that they stopped going because it just wasn't daring any more. The best of our entertainers just moved downtown and that was the whammy for many clubs. But now there's a comeback for Negro night spots and the best customers are our own folks with loot on their hands. Scouting the new trend, Chicago's Herman Roberts plunked down something like a cool \$100,000 to fancy up his Chicago lounge and night club. The results are really something to see.

What Roberts has on his hands is without doubt the biggest and some say the finest spot in the country catering to colored trade. And if the white folks come around, it won't bother him at all. His Roberts Show Club represents the largest bundle of bucks ever sunk into a Negro-owned and operated joint merely for improvements. First off, Roberts bought the old warehouse next door to his establishment on South Parkway and had it completely done over into a glass windowed foamstone front. Inside, there isn't a post in sight and guests won't have to be peeking around pillars to see the show on the 160 square foot pneumatic stage which rises and lowers to floor level at the push of a button. Roberts in this department seems to have gone his New York night club rivals a step better because there are relatively few Gotham spots where you don't run into that post problem. Roberts has a glass enclosed dining room in the new addition, which will seat approximately 200 guests.

Biggest construction of the new addition is the "Key Club" which runs the length of both the new and old building, nearly half a block in all. The whole club will have three bars and seat over 1,200 people. The new Roberts layout, which opened with the Louis Jordan floor show extravaganza, is now the most plush and most costly Negro night club in America. The show policy, incidentally, will be handled by Olivette Miller, daughter of the famed comedian, Flourney Miller. Olivette, a jazz harpist, signed an 18-week contract as show producer long before anybody woke up to what was going on.

DUKE ON DISCS



Ziggy

Each month DUKE asks a leading disc jockey for his selection of the most played popular records as well as the discs he feels will click in coming weeks. Our duke on discs this issue is famed Joe "Ziggy" Johnson of Detroit's Station WJLB.

by JOE (ZIGGY) JOHNSON

THERE ARE a lot of sounds going down that the folks are hollering for. I get all kinds of requests on my nightly show for "Mr. Boh" (National Bohemian Beer) and man, I can say they include a lot of things you'd never expect.

Seems, though, most of the good stuff is coming out in album form lately. As one enthusiast put it, "Not only are they singing good but dig how colorful the record jackets are." Here at WJLB the ten top tunes, according to my list of records most requested, are:

1. It Hurts To Be In Love—Annie Laurie
2. You Got to Get Up Early—Little Willie John
3. De Banana Boat Song—Sarah Vaughan
4. The Knocked Out Nightingale—Mills Brothers
5. Only Trust Your Heart—Dean Martin
6. But Not for Me—Nat "King" Cole
7. Jamaica Farewell—Harry Belafonte
8. Everything I Do Is Wrong—B. B. King
9. Rock Doc—Louis Jordan
10. Georgie Porgie—Levi Mann

I have been playing several other tunes that I personally feel will come into their own in just a short time. You know, it's a funny thing how records grow into hits. You play the ones the folks expect you to play and then you slip in a new one that hasn't had much publicity behind it. After two or three plays, your listeners will start telephoning and asking where they can buy it. Next thing you know, the platter is on your daily must-play list.

As an example of what I mean, take the new one by beautiful Etta James, called "The Market Place." It's going

up fast on the lists here in Detroit where I believe we have the most up-to-date and on-the-ball listening public in America. Same thing goes for the new Ruth Brown number, "Lucky Lips." It's very hot and as the race caller at the track would say, "Lucky Lips" is moving up!

Among my latest albums are Louis Jordan's "Somebody Up There Digs Me." I've also got the one by that marvelous young Memphis piano player a lot of musicians believe will take the place of my great pal, the late and famous Art Tatum. Phineas Newborn is a guy to watch in my book. You should have heard Count Basie rave over him. In fact, every time I run into my man, the Count, he's got something new to say in praising Phineas whom he takes credit for discovering and helping get started on the way to the bigtime.

"There's no telling," Count told me the last time we chatted on the long distance phone, "how high he'll get in the music world. He's a real genius. I'm glad I know him."

One thing about Phineas and Little Ziggy: we're both the same size, even though I can't play piano but a little better than Dan Burley. Which means that I'll whistle and let Phineas play the notes.

I think that Fats Domino and Harry Belafonte will remain in the best-selling artists' category for quite a long time. I predict Harry will last longer, however, because the rock and roll fad seems to be petering out somewhat and what Harry is doing can easily be switched from calypso to something else. The guy, you must remember, started out as a ballad and pop singer. He's that versatile. However, don't rule Fats to the sidelines too quickly for that little guy is one of the type of musicians who can come up overnight with brand new ideas and the people really like him.

He found he could walk after his accident but could he still be a man?

night of manhood

by CHESTER HIMES

SIX WEEKS after the accident slight articulation had returned to his fingers.

"Keep kneading them," his doctor instructed. "Pretty soon we'll have those splints off and see how it looks."

One morning he discovered he could move his feet. He was afraid to mention it. For two days he kept his secret, wiggling his toes and finally moving his legs.

"Look," he showed the doctor.

The doctor was amazed. "Wonderful!" he exclaimed. He tapped the knees for reflexes. "Wonderful! Wonderful!"

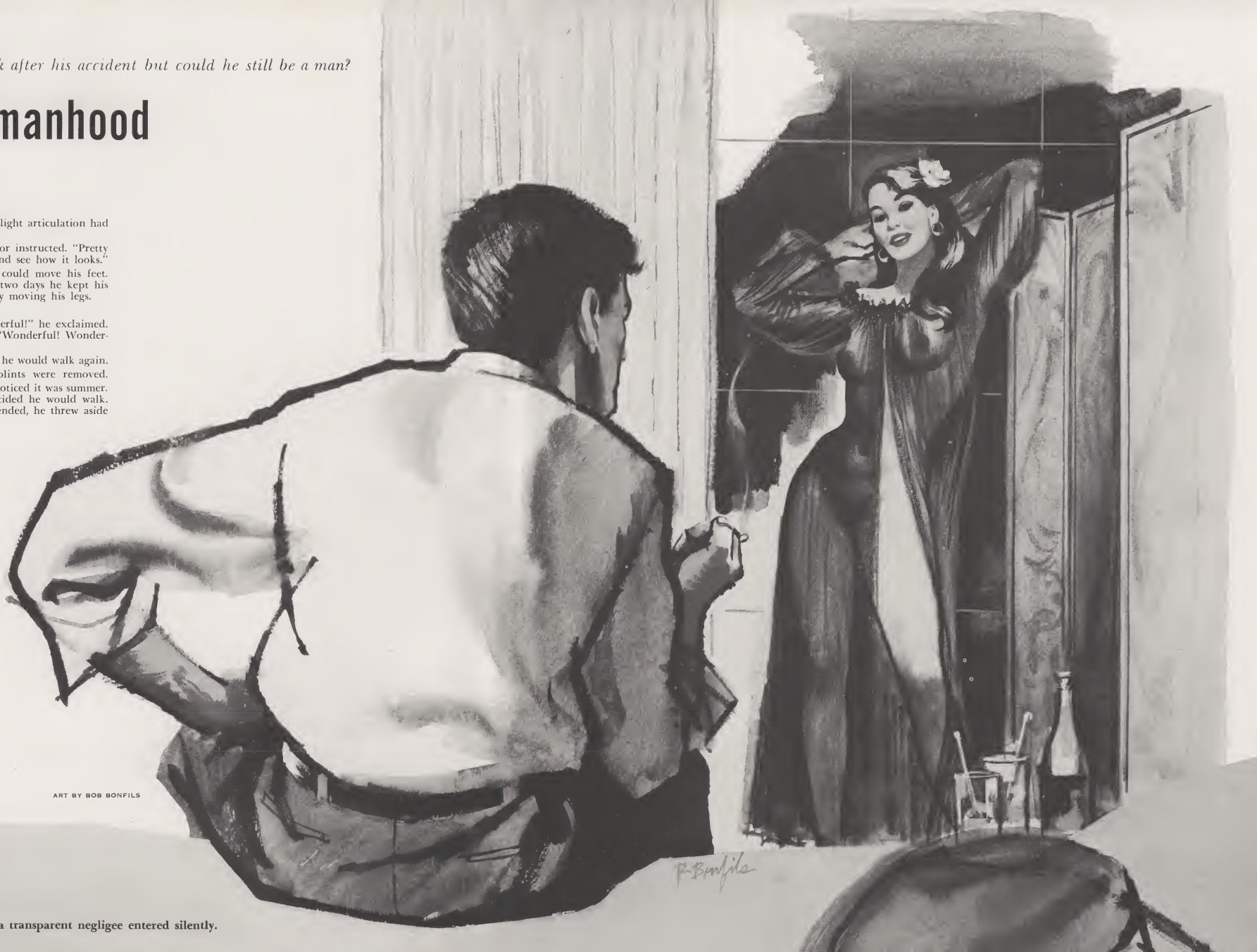
From then on Charles knew that he would walk again.

Several weeks following, the splints were removed.

One day he looked outside and noticed it was summer. Three months had passed. He decided he would walk. Waiting until the ward was unattended, he threw aside

ART BY BOB BONFILS

Then a young woman clad in a transparent negligee entered silently.



the covers, inched his body to the edge and stood. He was exceedingly weak, his knees buckled and his legs felt numb, half-asleep. The cast cut into his flesh. But his back did not hurt at all.

The nurse returned and caught him standing. Her face whitened. "What are you doing out of bed?"

He grinned at her. "I'm just trying out my legs."

Several of the other patients laughed. She flushed with anger.

"Help him, Clyde. Don't let him fall," she called to one of the convalescents while she ran for help.

Clyde came over and grasped him about the cast. "Steady, boy, steady."

"I wasn't going to fall," he protested, but by then he could barely stand.

The nurse returned with the resident doctor, several internes and the orderly.

"The army," Clyde murmured.

They lifted him back to bed. He felt a high, lightheaded exhilaration. Laughter bubbled from his lips.

"How does the back feel?" the doctor asked.

"It doesn't hurt a bit." Excitement slurred his voice; his face was flushed and his eyes were bright as fire.

His own doctors were incredulous. They ordered X-rays and warned him not to move. But several mornings later they came in grinning.

"We're going to let you walk a bit, Charles. See how you like it."

With their help he walked across the ward and back. They looked at one another.

"I fooled you, didn't I?" Charles laughed.

On the third of July, four months to a day, after he had fallen down the elevator shaft, he was discharged. The cast had been removed. He now wore a strong back-brace with two steel bars flanking the spinal column and straps about his shoulders and thighs.

His perceptions had sharpened. He felt things more strongly. Situations that had been commonplace were now stark and ugly. He was more easily irritated. His reactions had become hard, abrupt and violent. His world had filled with blacks and whites, harsh purples, vivid greens, blinding yellows. There were no shades, no tints, no grays, no in-betweens. His emotions were either intense or non-existent.

He'd thought how wonderful it would be back in the world of healthy people. But everything seemed strangely different, as if the world had gone out of focus while he'd been away.

He still had only partial use of his hand and required his mother's help in dressing. And the doctors had instructed him to sit for an hour each morning in a tub of hot water. But once these chores were done he left the house only to return for dinner.

He was self-conscious about the brace and wore a jacket even on the hottest days. It held him abnormally erect. His face was tight from the discomfort and frustration. His posture was mistaken for a sign of arrogance, his expression for disdain and condescension. He shrank from the antipathy in people's

eyes. He avoided going places where he was known. He never went to visit any of his former friends.

When he began visiting the dentist he found temporary escape. He was a garrulous old man with a great curiosity concerning Charles' background. He was fascinated by the stories of the southern Negro colleges. Sometimes they talked for hours.

Most afternoons Charles went to the movies, sitting alone in the obscurity of the loges, smoking an endless chain of cigarettes, absorbing the organ music, watching the fantasies unfold on the screen. And for a time he felt safe from the prying eyes. Nothing mattered then but the emotion which engulfed him. He could dream away his infirmity for an hour or two.

For a time the members of his club came to visit. He and Harvard took short walks in the park. Occasionally they went together to a show. But the old intimacy was lost. He found himself strangely intolerant of the fellows' social life. He couldn't bear to hear about the parties or the girls. There was little for them to talk about.

Finally he realized he didn't like the people he had known. They stopped coming. He was relieved. He liked it best alone. He sat alone for hours in the park, half-relaxed, unthinking, just sitting there hidden from the world. There was a high-grassy knoll where no one ever came. He lay there, stretched on the grass, and watched the lake. He never tired of watching the constant ripple of the waves. It soothed him. In the big expanse of water, like the world almost, nothing was permanent but change. Strangely, he liked the thought of that. A wave rose on the surface, took a million different contours as it rolled its six-foot span of life, and was gone; another took its place. Like all the countless people of the world, assuming the various shapes of life and then death.

He had always liked the night from the time he'd first discovered it. He had liked it then because of the difference in himself and in others too. Now he liked it because it hid him. At night no one could tell that he was infirm; no one could see the back-brace bulging from his jacket. And he could revel in the various wonders of the night—the lighted marquees of the theaters, spilling magic on the flower-gardened people; railroad trains with their thousand yellow eyes gliding down the dark lake-shore; moonlight on the great expanse of water like ever-crumbling dreams. He was imbued by that moving, inarticulate awe of beauty given only to the very young.

He began walking until late at night going far from the neighborhoods he had known. He liked to walk among the dwellings of the rich, past the old mansions hidden deep behind the night-black landscapes. Shaded lamps glowed cheerfully behind wide windows; here and there someone sat in a cone of light placidly reading, guarded by the shrubs and evergreens—sentinels in the outside darkness. From afar they seemed so

peaceful, enveloped in serenity, impregnable to all the irritations and distractions that were his lot. He imagined the residents as happy and contented, filled with the joy of living. He felt it was wonderful to be rich, have all the things one wanted, nothing to worry about, and so many marvelous things to do to fill the lonely hours. He came to feel that by a tiny twist of circumstance he might have lived there too. Deep down it was the life he yearned for.

It made him discontent. He lost all liking for his own home. He became restless, slowly desperate in his loneliness.

His thoughts returned to girls, but to none he'd ever known. The summer's heat and sexual urges boiled within him. His hot, naked stare bore into women, sought their lips and breasts and hips, undressing them. Walking down a quiet, sexless street, he'd pass a woman with firm breasts, and catch afire, unable to control the throbbing in his groins. He had to walk with his hands in his pockets to hide his agitation. And all the hippy, full-breasted girls about the neighborhood drove him frantic.

Finally, in desperation, he turned to Scovill Avenue. He'd been there often in the daytime. By day there were the aged and smoke-blackened churches, grubby stores, barbecue joints, pool halls, dismal tenements, funeral parlors, flanking on the filthy gutters, no different from another slum street. Deserted for the most part, it was pitifully forlorn. But at night it teemed with a sinister life as the wretched inhabitants crawled from their dark vermin-ridden holes to traffic in prostitution, mugging and murder.

He moved warily as one picking his way through hostile territory. His breath was short from tension, congested in his chest, his muscles taut. A vein throbbed in his temple.

"Wunna see uh girl, baby?" a hoarse, whiskey-thickened voice spoke indifferently in his ear.

He jumped, startled, wheeled about. Beside him loomed a hideous hag, her scarred, painted face twisted in a lewd grimace. The vile reek of her breath poured into his face, polluting his nostrils. He drew back, shaking his head, and hastened his stride.

"Go tuh hell den, you sissy," the whore reviled, waking up the darkness. The shadows crawled with unseen life.

He heard a snicker slither through the gloom, a laugh, another whiskey voice. "You tell 'im, Mayme."

He shuddered beneath the scorn that flowed over him like filth. His impulse was to flee. But he couldn't give up so easily. An ungovernable urge held him to his purpose. There must be some that he could bear. The fellows in his club who'd said they'd gone by way of Scovill couldn't possibly have lain with these wretched hags.

Suddenly a beam of light struck across the street, catching a horde of cruising women and stealthy men in stark tableau. The next instant the

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"All right. Where is he? The bed is still warm on this side!"

At bar and in boudoir, Negroes are strictly old-fashioned

OUR MEN LIKE IT STRAIGHT

by GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

DESPITE the ravages and blandishments of white civilization, the U. S. colored brethren have not appreciably acquired a taste for the sophisticated and exotic but still prefer everything straight in food, whiskey and love.

Resourceful white bartenders "downtown" may offer a bewildering variety of drinks which are colorful, queer and camouflaged, and culled from the ends of the earth, but "uptown" the preference is straight rye, bourbon, Scotch, gin, "corn," rum and beer. It is these

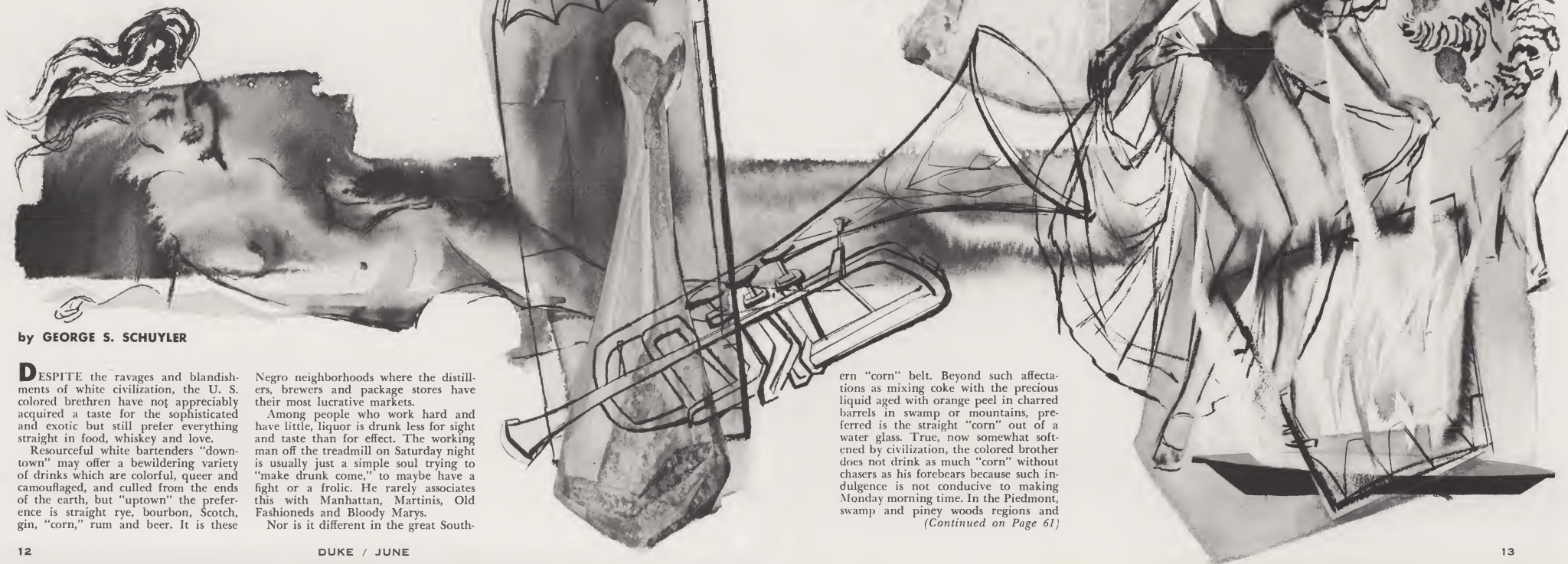
Negro neighborhoods where the distillers, brewers and package stores have their most lucrative markets.

Among people who work hard and have little, liquor is drunk less for sight and taste than for effect. The working man off the treadmill on Saturday night is usually just a simple soul trying to "make drunk come," to maybe have a fight or a frolic. He rarely associates this with Manhattan, Martinis, Old Fashioneds and Bloody Marys.

Nor is it different in the great South-

ern "corn" belt. Beyond such affectations as mixing coke with the precious liquid aged with orange peel in charred barrels in swamp or mountains, preferred is the straight "corn" out of a water glass. True, now somewhat softened by civilization, the colored brother does not drink as much "corn" without chasers as his forebears because such indulgence is not conducive to making Monday morning time. In the Piedmont, swamp and piney woods regions and

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The Last White Man

by RAY BRADBURY

WHEN they heard the news they came out of the restaurants and cafés and hotels and looked at the sky. They lifted their dark hands over their upturned white eyes. Their mouths hung wide. In the hot noon for thousands of miles there were little towns where the dark people stood with their shadows under them, looking up.

In her kitchen Hattie Johnson covered the boiling soup, wiped her thin fingers on a cloth, and walked carefully to the back porch.

"Come on, Mal Hey, Ma, come on—you'll miss it!"

"Hey, Mom!"

Three little Negro boys danced around in the dusty yard, yelling. Now and then they looked at the house frantically.

"I'm coming," said Hattie, and opened the screen door. "Where you hear this rumor?"

"Up at Jones's, Ma. They say a rocket's coming, first one in twenty years, with a white man in it!"

"What's a white man? I never seen one."

"You'll find out," said Hattie. "Yes indeed, you'll find out."

"Tell us about one, Ma. Tell like you did."

Hattie frowned. "Well, it's been a long time. I was a little girl, you see. That was back in 1965."

"Tell us about a white man, Mom!"

She came and stood in the yard, looking up at the blue clear Martian sky with the thin white Martian clouds, and in the distance the Martian hills broiling in the heat. She said at last, "Well, first of all, they got white hands."

"White hands!" The boys joked, slapping each other.

"And they got white arms."

"White arms!" hooted the boys.

"And white faces."

"White faces! Really?"

"White like this, Mom?" The smallest threw dust on his face, sneezing. "This way?"

"Whiter than that," she said gravely, and turned to the sky again. There was a troubled thing in her eyes, as if she was looking for a thundershower up high, and not seeing it made her worry. "Maybe you better go inside."

"Oh, Mom!" They stared at her in disbelief. "We got to watch, we just got to. Nothing's going to happen, is it?"

"I don't know. I got a feeling, is all."

"We just want to see the ship and maybe run down

The rocket lay a moment in quiet and then
an old man stepped out—a white man.

ART BY DAN SECULIN

to the port and see that white man. What's he like, huh, Mom?"

"I don't know. I just don't know," she mused, shaking her head.

"Tell us some more!"

"Well, the white people live on Earth, which is where we all come from, twenty years ago. We just up and walked away and came to Mars and set down and built towns and here we are. Now we're Martians instead of Earth people. And no white men've come up here in all that time. That's the story."

"Why didn't they come up, Mom?"

"Well, 'cause. Right after we got up here, Earth got in an atom war. They blew each other up terribly. They forgot us. When they finished fighting, after years, they didn't have any rockets. Took them until recently to build more. So here they come now, twenty years later, to visit." She gazed at her children numbly and then began to walk. "You wait here. I'm going down the line to Elizabeth Brown's house. You promise to stay?"

"We don't want to but we will."

"All right, then." And she ran off down the road.

At the Browns' she arrived in time to see everybody packed into the family car. "Hey, there, Hattie! Come on along!"

"Where you going?" she said, breathlessly running up.

"To see the white man!"

"That's right," said Mr. Brown seriously. He waved at his load. "These children never saw one, and I almost forgot."

"What you going to do with that white man?" asked Hattie.

"Do?" said everyone. "Why—just look at him, is all."

"What else can we do?"

"I don't know," said Hattie. "I just thought there might be trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"You know," said Hattie vaguely, embarrassed. "You ain't going to lynch him?"

"Lynch him?" Everyone laughed. Mr. Brown slapped his knee. "Why, bless you, child, no! We're going to shake his hand. Ain't we, everyone?"

"Sure, sure!"

Another car drove up from another direction and Hattie gave a cry. "Willie!"

"What you doing 'way down here? Where's the kids?" shouted her husband angrily. He glared at the others. "You going down like a bunch of fools to see that man come in?"

"That appears to be just right," agreed Mr. Brown, nodding and smiling.

"Well, take your guns along," said Willie. "I'm on my way home for mine right now!"

"Willie!"

"You get in this car, Hattie." He held the door open firmly, looking at her until she obeyed. Without another word to the others he roared the car down the dusty road.

"Willie, not so fast!"

"Not so fast, huh? We'll see about

that." He watched the road tear under the car. "What right they got coming up here this late? Why don't they leave us in peace? Why didn't they blow themselves up on that old world and let us be?"

"Willie, that ain't no Christian way to talk."

"I'm not feeling Christian," he said savagely, gripping the wheel. "I'm just feeling mean. After all them years of doing what they did to our folks—my mom and dad, and your mom and dad — You remember? You remember how they hung my father on Knockwood Hill and shot my mother? You remember? Or you got a memory that's short like the others?"

"I remember," she said.

"You remember Dr. Phillips and Mr. Burton and their big houses, and my mother's washing shack, and Dad working when he was old, and the thanks he got was being hung by Dr. Phillips and Mr. Burton. Well," said Willie, "the shoe's on the other foot now. We'll see who gets laws passed against him, who gets lynched, who rides the back of streetcars, who gets segregated in shows. We'll just wait and see."

"Oh, Willie, you're talking trouble."

"Everybody's talking. Everybody's thought on this day, thinking it'd never be. Thinking, what kind of day would it be if the white man ever came up here to Mars? But here's the day, and we can't run away."

"Ain't you going to let the white people live up here?"

"Sure." He smiled, but it was a wide, mean smile, and his eyes were mad. "They can come up and live and work here; why, certainly. All they got to do to deserve it is live in their own small part of town, the slums, and shine our shoes for us, and mop up our trash, and sit in the last row in the balcony. That's all we ask. And once a week we hang one or two of them. Simple."

"You don't sound human, and I don't like it."

"You'll have to get used to it," he said. He braked the car to a stop before the house and jumped out. "Find my guns and some rope. We'll do this right."

"Oh, Willie," she wailed, and just sat there in the car while he ran up the steps and slammed the front door.

She went along. She didn't want to go along, but he rattled around in the attic, cursing like a crazy man until he found four guns. She saw the brutal metal of them glittering in the black attic, and she couldn't see him at all, he was so dark; she heard only his swearing, and at last his long legs came climbing down from the attic in a shower of dust, and he stacked up bunches of brass shells and blew out the gun chambers and clicked shells into them, his face stern and heavy and folded in upon the gnawing bitterness there. "Leave us alone," he kept muttering, his hands flying away from him suddenly, uncontrolled. "Leave us blame alone, why don't they?"

"Willie, Willie."

"You too—you too." And he gave her

the same look, and a pressure of his hatred touched her mind.

Outside the window, the boys gabbled to each other. "White as milk, she said. White as milk."

"White as this old flower, you see?"

"White as a stone, like chalk you write with."

Willie plunged out of the house. "You children come inside, I'm locking you up. You ain't seeing no white man, you ain't talking about them, you ain't doing nothing. Come on now."

"But, Daddy—"

He shoved them through the door and went and fetched a bucket of paint and a stencil and from the garage a long thick hairy rope coil into which he fashioned a hangman's knot, very carefully watching the sky while his hands felt their way at their task.

And then they were in the car, leaving bolts of dust behind them down the road. "Slow up, Willie," he said.

"This is no slowing-up time," he said.

"This is a hurrying time, and I'm hurrying."

All along the road people were looking up in the sky, or climbing in their cars, or riding in cars, and guns were sticking up out of some cars like telescopes sighting all the evils of a world coming to an end.

She looked at the guns. "You been talking," she accused her husband.

"That's what I been doing," he grunted, nodding. He watched the road, fiercely. "I stopped at every house and I told them what to do, to get their guns, to get paint, to bring rope and be ready. And here we all are, the welcoming committee, to give them the key to the city. Yes, sir!"

She pressed her thin dark hands together to push away the terror growing in her now, and she felt the car bucket and lurch around other cars. She heard the voices yelling, Hey Willie, look! And hands holding up ropes and guns as they rushed by and mouths smiling at them in the swift rushing.

"Here we are," said Willie, and braked the car into dusty halting and silence. He kicked the door open with a big foot and, laden with weapons, stepped out, lugging them across the airport meadow.

"Have you thought, Willie?"

"That's all I done for twenty years. I was sixteen when I left Earth, and I was glad to leave," he said. "There wasn't anything there for me or you or anybody like us. I've never been sorry I left. We've had peace here, the first time we ever drew a solid breath. Now, come on."

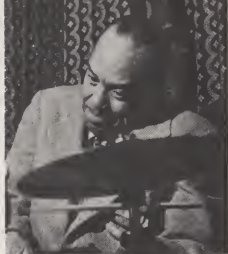
He pushed through the dark crowd which came to meet him.

"Willie, Willie, what we gonna do?" they said.

"Here's a gun," he said. "Here's a gun. Here's another." He passed them out with savage jabs of his arms. "Here's a pistol. Here's a shotgun."

The people were so close together it looked like one dark body with a thousand arms reaching out to take the weapons. "Willie, Willie."

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Zutty Singleton



Max Roach

SCHOOL FOR SKINS



Gene Krupa

*In Chicago niteries, noted drummer learned
about skin color and skin beating*

by GENE KRUPA

I'VE BEEN hearing some strange who-shot-John static among musicians these last months. It hasn't been just dressing room gossip or guys crying in their beer after hours at the Friendly Tavern. This noise wound up in a big public blast by Stan Kenton, who said in so many words that palefaces were getting pushed around the bandstand when it came to collecting honors in jazz polls.

Now, Stan's my man but in my book he was sounding some awfully sour notes in this particular jam session. I do admire him for coming out in the open and saying what I've heard some shadowy characters say in private. At least he has the courage of his convictions that white musicians are not getting the breaks. But as much as I like to stay away from a rumble, I can't help but talk up and say my piece about this business of color in the music business.

Going back through my years in jazz, I sometimes ask myself what the so-and-

so would have happened to Gene Krupa in my early days in Chicago if I hadn't been given a chance to learn what jazz was all about from some really great Negro musicians. It would be ridiculous for me to deny this debt, just as it is inane to deny the very origin of jazz in Negro life. Jazz is as much Negro as the spiritual and to pretend anything but that is to fly in the face of fact.

What white musicians have been doing for almost a half century is to beg, borrow and even steal this racial asset from Negroes. This is not to say that once the heist was committed that a flock of great ofay jazz men were not able to improvise and improve on their larceny. Certainly Stan Kenton proved a veritable genius in his gift for making new sounds out of what was often literally "old music." No one can take that away from him or any of the other terrific white talents in the jazz field.

But I still insist that it all started

down in New Orleans and that it was the fellows with cheeks of tan that first performed the obstetrical wonders that gave birth to jazz.

From that basic theme, there have been many variations since—everything from Lombardo to Brubeck. But it all started down there on Basin Street in New Orleans.

I got in on the deal when jazz moved lock, stock and tomtom up to Chicago's South Side. Colored musicians were my elementary school profs and I'm sure I'd never be beating the kind of hides I do today without the kind of learning I got from fellows like Tubby Hall playing then at the Sunset with Louis Armstrong; Zutty Singleton getting his licks in at the Cafe de Paris (it used to be the Lincoln Gardens in the days of Joe Oliver and then later the Royal Gardens); Ollie Powell pounding the hides with Jimmy Noone at the Nest; and Cuba Austin banging the tubs with

the fabled McKinney's Cotton Pickers.

I lived the kind of drums they played 24 hours a day. In my book they were the end. If I hadn't listened to them, it never would have been the same Gene Krupa. Maybe I'd still have gone ahead and become a successful drummer. But I'm ready to doubt it. I was then just about 17 and a member of an all-white combo (and that all-white was all there was in those days—all-white and all-colored). We all had our coats pulled by the colored jazzmen we wanted so much to sound like.

I'd haunt the South Side joints all kinds of crazy hours and then I'd go home to do my homework, trying to get the sounds I heard in the dark of the night. The rhythm patterns of the Negro musicians were different and it didn't take any expert to know it. Listening to them, you were always conscious that there was something new to learn every time.

For me to go to school in Negro night clubs was a lot easier than for some of the other fellows who had to head for the West and North Side when the sun started coming up in the ayem and school was out for us. Lucky for me, Mama took my drums seriously and school-teacher that she was, she still didn't object to my coming home so late. She figured that if I was serious about music, she ought to give me a chance to find my way.

Any idea that I knew anything about skins had to go out the window once I started hitting those South Side joints. For one thing, I had no idea of the wide range of effects you could get from a set of drums. I picked up from Zutty Singleton and Baby Dodds the difference between starting a roll or sequence of beats with the left or right hand and how the tone and inflection changed entirely when you shifted hands. Those Negro drummers did it nonchantly as though it was something of a game.

Taking my cue from what I heard, I next went to work on the tomtoms trying to get them in tune and knowing when to use 'em. I punched holes in them with an icepick, as Zutty told me, until they were just pitched right. Another trick I got from Baby Dodds was how to keep the bass and the snare drum in tune and how to get cymbals that rung in tune and were pitched in certain keys. Then came the cowbell and the woodblock.

You see most white musicians of that day thought drums were something you used to beat the hell out of. The monotonous pattern made you feel weary after listening to it for a while. Few of them realized that drums have a broad range of tonal variations so they can be played to fit into a harmonic pattern as well as a rhythmic one.

If you've ever dug some of these commercial bands who sound like a set of bum hydraulic lifters on a broken-down car, you'll get what I mean.

Actually, I was knocked off my rocker as I began to realize the great natural genius of the Negro musician. I began to dig the fact that this music was an expression of something down deep un-

derneath that seemed to reflect an always-living, heads-up attitude toward life. It seemed to me then as it does now that everything Negro I came in contact with did have a swing to it, something entirely different from any other race. Musically, their tonal expression pleased the ear first.

And that is what bothers me about some of the so-called modern music you hear today—or maybe I should say what they call music. It's not that I don't approve of getting offbeat, of improvising on a tune. When you come right down to it, improvising is jazz. If you can't improvise, then you're nowhere, Jack, for improvisation is the very foundation of playing hot music. And Negro musicians invented it.

But I'm of the old school and I'm first of all a dance musician. There's a lot of difference between playing for a dance crowd and one that stands around and listens.

Jazz, as anyone who starts on first base knows, is essentially emotional music in which tempo rules as king. And if you can't dance to the music, that's something else and not necessarily jazz. You see, dancing and jazz are tied up real tight like a cat and his old lady, if you dig what I mean. It was the dancers who first set up the rules for jazz tempos, not the musicians. So, if a guy doesn't know how to play for dancing, he's not much in the line of being a true jazz man. And there are a lot of cats who don't know.

Listening to these new cats and looking them over drumwise, I find they follow less intense rhythmic patterns and take far more liberties than we dance drummers ever dared to do, for one of the first things I learned from the old Chicago vets was not to monkey around with an established tempo. If you did, you threw the dancers out of step and that hauled down the curtains on you as a band attraction or as a sideman. The modernists, on the other hand, who were not trained as dance drummers, do almost anything that comes to mind and they get away with it because the people who follow 'em have stopped dancing or never learned how.

These young drummers, and there are some outstanding ones among them, try to do too much. They try to play everything in an eight bar break. If I beat out in my wildest solo and the people couldn't dance to it, I'd be really shocked for I learned years ago that you just can't break time.

Of course, dancing has become sort of old hat these days when television is the lick. The only ones who still dance are some of the teenagers on the rock and roll kick and basically what they do is more wiggle than beat, even though the music does have a good tempo. And of course, rock and roll is all blues and boogie of the kind that's been played in colored joints for years. The only thing really new is the bump and grind that Elvis has added.

Since I first got into it in 1927, there have been a lot of changes in jazz. Fundamental changes. I'll walk a plank here and say that the Negroes who originated

it, are the ones who are dictating the changes. When Dizzy Gillespie, Yardbird Parker, Thelonius Monk and Art Blakey began their experimenting with new sounds in Harlem back in the 40's, it was the crossroads of jazz as we older musicians knew it. Since that time, bop evolved into "modern music" as they're calling it now. The cool school has grown almost overnight into a kingdom by itself.

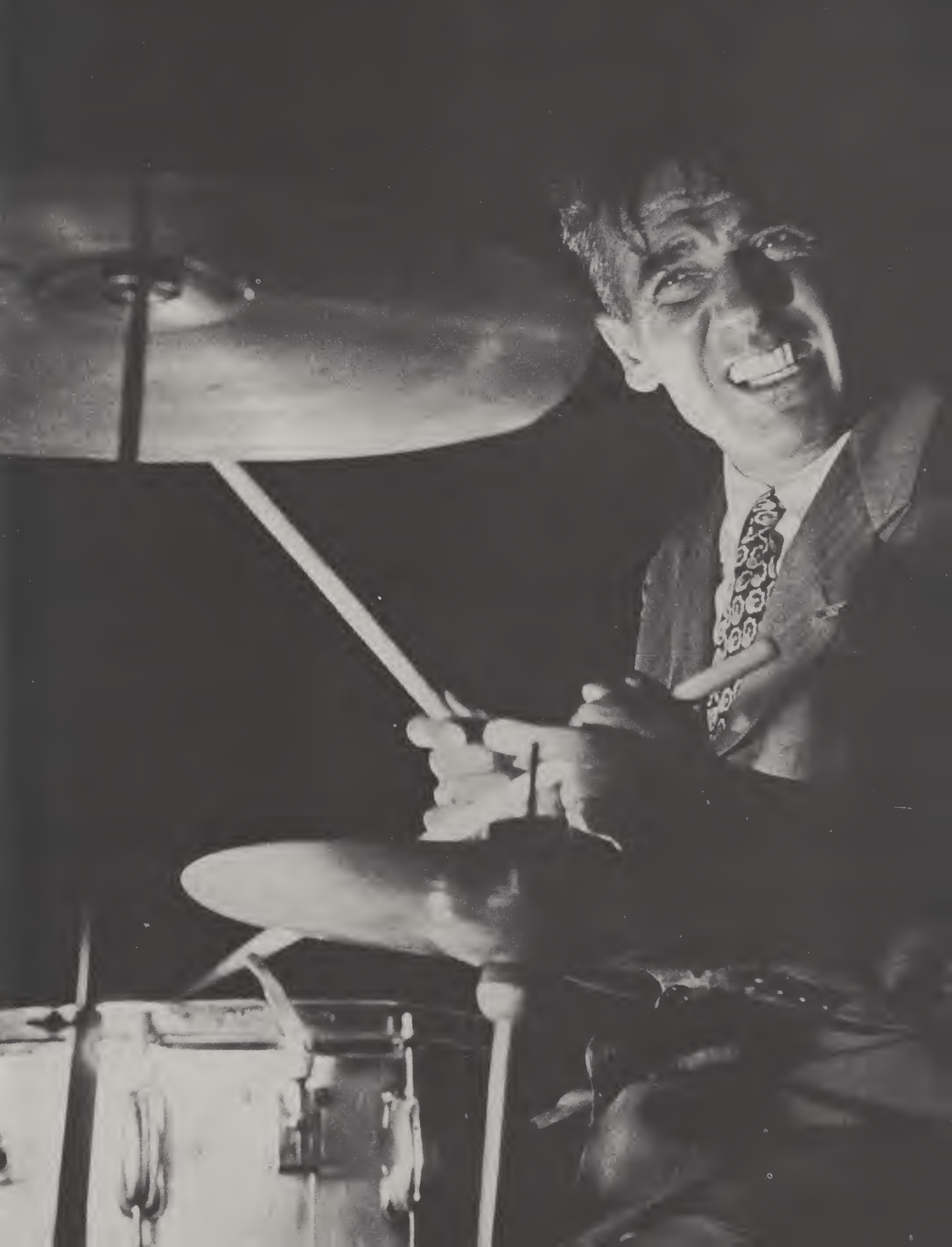
Even these wild men owe a big debt to the early Negro musicians. But there are some cats around who are trying to drag Louis Armstrong, for instance, but as far as I'm concerned, there isn't a trumpet man in jazz today, regardless of how modern he calls himself, who can play 16 bars without doing something not influenced or originated by Satch. Some cats are saying, I understand, that Satch is through and all washed up. But in my book he is still the greatest. Pops has showmanship and he can blow only three or four notes and kill people while some other cat has to blow the whole scale over and over and still not get a hand.

It's great to dig the new music, but let's not low-rate the oldtimers in the process. The fact is that I and everyone in jazz ought to bow down in the direction of New Orleans every time we get on the bandstand. That's where it all began and we wouldn't be drawing weekly paychecks today if it wasn't for the Negro musicians down there who originated jazz.

I learned my early lessons in the 20's just as though I were going to school every day except the "professors" were guys like Erskine Tate, Darnell Howard, old George Washington, the great Dixieland drummer; Mike McKendricks, Art Tatum and the others. While I listened, it gradually came to me that these fellows were doing just what I'd wanted to do all my life, find the soul of this new music and feel it for myself. I wanted to dive into it and stay there until I got drenched with rhythm.

Maybe I did, for since then, I've never stopped listening and learning. Strange thing about drums: they are capable of giving you so many interpretations of rhythmic patterns and "messages" that to repeat only half of them would require a lifetime. Behind a jazz band, driving to an explosive climax, drums can set people on fire. I know they do that for me when I've got a 32 bar solo and realize it's up to me to set and maintain a continuous mood of excitement. I lose sight of everything except the fact that for the moment, I'm king and everybody listening is my subject.

I sometimes think that I wouldn't be able to have that feeling and might be playing for a Lawrence Welk or Guy Lombardo type band if I hadn't been lucky enough to have had my coat pulled by experts when I was a kid. I don't regret a single minute of those days when I hung around the colored jazzmen, bug-eyed and with my ears poked out like a jackrabbit digging the deal that was eventually to put me on top.





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*Lloyd's of London
offers to cover each
of Ilene Day's
bountiful endowments*



THE NIGHT that Ilene Day opened in London's classiest cabaret, the Pigalle, an underwriter for the famed Lloyd's insurance firm burst into her dressing room after her pulsating performance that had critics hailing her as a combination Sophie Tucker and Venus de Milo. "Miss Day," he gasped, "I'm prepared to cover each one for \$150,000."

"Fine," answered Ilene, "but what the heck are you talking about?"

"That," said the insurance man, pointing to her ample bosom (41 inches of it). "It must be the most insurable commodity in Britain. Just think of the money you'll collect if it ever lets you down."

"Maybe I'd be wise to insure it against a fall," responded Ilene with a throaty chuckle, "but it's rather like tempting fate. I'd rather have the uplift than collect the insurance."

The offer to insure her bosom for \$300,000 is not the only flattery that Ilene Day has attracted since her arrival in London. Her startling curves have provided her with the kind of insurance that most performers only dream about. Many a jaded European nightclubber has done a double-take when sighting her dual attraction at the Pigalle nitery, where she will be until September.

Ilene shipped her kingsize bust to Europe after a stretch of singing in smart supper clubs in the States and doing the

(Continued on Page 66)



*Ilene Day puts on a better show
in her dressing room
than in night club spotlight
and DUKE's camera records
a backstage session to prove the point.*





Emerging from
dressing room,
Ilene Day takes
inventory before
placing it on display
for Bond Street playboys





"What kind of living would we make if I stayed in bed all day?"



She carried her head thrown back in a way that accentuated her brown beauty.

Did he really score with Ester, or was he just last man on the line?

DADDY-O, THAT'S ME

by WILLIAM FISHER

IN ONE GULP Asher drained off the suds the bartender had poured into the stemmed glass and tilted his glass slightly to pour the remainder from the bottle so he would not ring the glass with a deep collar of foam. He looked up and down the bar, crowded with waiters talking and laughing, some turning whiskey tumblers to their mouths, others selecting drinks with the meticulousness of a Fishbowl ordering dinner. They talked differently there at the bar than on the job, Asher noticed. He heard snatches of their conversation:

"Did you lamp that fine corn-haired ofay with that Navy officer I was waitin' on, Jack? She was just like my old lady out in Chi."

"Jesus, five thirty-five! I oughta have my whatsoname kicked. You know, I called that ol' Italian man I used to work for day 'fore yesterday. And whatta you know, his new number was Dayton 4-45-3-5."

"Go on, man! And I ain't been able to catch a figure since way last March."

They were all manner of men: college-trained, with bright, alert faces, from the Southern schools, burning with the spirit of the new Negro; the middle-aged victims of a lack of educational opportunity, rejoicing in their offspring and the bright, alert faces; the "beat," the defiled, those besmeared by a life that had taught them "all Negroes are alike," distrustful and suspicious of the bright, alert faces; the rum pots; the muck-worms; the gamblers; the part-time whore-masters—America's black neglects and America's black hopes.

One of them, Walters, walked from the head of the bar where he had been perched on a stool to where Asher was sitting in front of the beer-cooler. He was a dried-up little fellow with red eyes; several of his upper molars missing. An old-timer, he had been a steamship and dining-car waiter for some fifteen years.

"No, pal, it can't be like that," he said to Asher, waving a highball glass with a scant half-inch of whiskey in it. "Hey, Mike, give him a shot. A man can't drink that beer all night. Just ain't right. Set us both up."

"Sure bet," said Mike as he set down two whisky tumblers and fingered the bottles on the shelf behind him. He found Walters' brand and poured the drinks.

Asher mixed the rye and soda-water and touched the rim of his glass with that of Walters. "Here's to you, old man," he said, and turned his glass up to his mouth. Throwing his head back, he let the liquid funnel into his throat. Then he ordered another round for himself and Walters. Soon, the two waiters were exchanging common experiences they had



had in other houses and in other cities. One drink led to another and eventually they fell to discussing girls.

"Say, pal," Walter said jubilantly, "I know where there's some fine chicks. Wanna come with me?"

"Not tonight. Got to get my things outa pawn 'fore I start out."

Walters traced little circles on the bar in the puddle from his sweating glass. "Stop foolin' yourself, kid," he said. "You was born in hock and you gonna be in hock all your natural life."

"In or out, I'm gonna get my clothes first," Asher said. "This here is the only suit I've got to wear."

"Ain't nothin' wrong with it," Walters said as he looked Asher over in his neat, double-breasted blue suit. "'Cause I can understand. When I was a young fellow I didn't wanna go chasing no chicks with my workin' pants on, either. Might get caught short."

While Walters was talking to Asher, Dave, the waiter who called everybody pardner, walked into the bar jauntily. He waved an infectious hello to everyone. Behind him came the two girls who worked in the ladies' room in the Fishbowl. They were Hattie, a moon-faced girl snapping on a wad of chewing gum, and a black-eyed girl whose name Asher did not know. Mike joined the waiters in a chorus of hello's such as are ordinarily reserved for someone just returned from a trip.

Dave and the girls looked about for a place at the bar, but it was crowded so they moved toward the booths. Asher watched the black-eyed girl's image in the mirror as she walked, her shoulders high, the skirt of her dress swaying gently as her hips undulated like those of a dancer. Jesus, Asher said to himself. She's hot stuff.

Walters kept up a rapid-fire chatter about the time he was in a bar in Rio de Janeiro with the crew of the *Santa Clair* and a fight started. As he talked, he gesticulated with his hands and arms, but Asher was not listening to him. He kept looking at the girl in the mirror. Suddenly, Walters gave him a wallop on his shoulder that made Asher jump. The girl looked up and her eyes met Asher's in the mirror. She narrowed her eyes very suddenly, giving him a faintly cynical look. Asher felt sick all over, as if the last drink had been one too many. But it was not an unpleasant sensation at all—painful but strongly agreeable; and then he felt quite weak. The girl dropped her eyes quickly.

"Who's that baby?" Asher said, almost as if he were talking to himself. Then he reached for his drink.

Walters turned his body halfway round on the stool to have a good look at Dave and the girls. The black-eyed girl



sat on one side of the narrow table across from Dave and Hattie. Then Walters turned back to Asher. "That's Dave's old lady chewing the gum," he said, giving Asher a measured look.

"Not her, the other dame, I mean."

"Listen, pal," cautioned Walters, "that empty seat over there will put you further in hock. That's Miss Ester. She's high-powered. But she's a real woman. Everybody falls for her, but she never loses her head over it." Walter sipped his drink and took another look at Asher eyeing the girl in the mirror. "Right now, Monroe's shooting after her. Don't know why he ain't over there right now, unless his wife came out here for him tonight. An', pal, you gotta have the long foldin' green to go after what he likes."

Just then Dave stood up, and stretched himself languidly. He studied the backs at the bar and their faces in the dingy mirror. Then he walked over, and put his arms on Asher's shoulder.

"How'd you like to come over, pardner, and meet the folks," Dave said. "Now don't get no idea in your head that anybody sent for you. I just thought maybe you'd rather pass the time with us than with these turkeys."

Asher turned completely around on the high stool and looked at the black-eyed girl. She reminded him of the picture he saw every time he heard Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady"—a tall, tan, terrific dame.

"Okay by me," he said. He turned to Walters. "Be seein' you, pal."

"What the hell you puttin' down," Walters said good-naturedly to Dave. "Framin' my boy?"

"Not on your life, pardner," Dave replied. "I'm just gonna fix him up right."

The boys walked over to the booth and Dave made the introductions. Ester nodded and smiled, as Asher slid onto the bench beside her.

"How's the joint usin' you?" Hattie said in a pleasant, rehearsed manner.

"Me?" parried Asher. "I'm as green behind the ears as a newborn babe."

Ester turned her head sharply to one side and fixed Asher with a steady, opaque look. Becoming instantly restive, Asher looked off in space, wondering if he was making a good impression.

"He's all right," double-talked Dave, looking from Asher to Ester.

"Do you stop in here every night?" Asher asked Ester.

Ester looked into Asher's face for a split second. Her full red mouth was open and it quivered at the edges angrily as she countered, "What do you think I am?" Then she picked up a cigarette, rolled it between her fingers, thumped both of its ends on the table slowly. "All you men are the same. Like a bunch of children. Just 'cause you live in these bars you think every woman you meet is a bar-fly."

"Just a minute," Asher said. "I didn't mean no harm." Ester smiled, very suddenly. "I'm sorry," she said. "I didn't have any right soundin' off like that."

Asher studied her face. It was difficult to guess her age, but figuring—as best he could—he took her to be thirty-five. And that much, only because of the way she carried herself. Yet she did not look as old as that. Her face was unlined and her skin was as smooth as a child's. She did not have very good features. They certainly would not put her up among the winners of a beauty contest, Asher thought. They were too blunt. Her short nose was a little thick; but her eyes had a deep blackness and they smiled with her lips, red and sensual. And her smile was the most friendly he had ever seen.

Nature had given her a heavy, sad look—the kind so many of life's dispossessed have—but when she smiled her sadness became suddenly attractive, like the warmth of a child. Her face was a very pale brown like chocolate mocha, which gave to her black hair a brownish cast in the dim light.

She carried her head thrown back in a way that accentuated the brown beauty of her neck. She was slender, but her shapely breasts stood out firmly and her hips were well defined. Asher's face smarted as he watched her light her cigarette. His throat was dry but his lips were wet. The corners of his mouth twitched.

Ester looked dreamily at the men standing at the bar. Then she turned her sad, heavy face to Asher. And Asher looked into her face, then hid his hot blood and his flushed face behind his drink, emulating the dried-up indifference of an old rounder as best he could.

The little party talked on, as the waiters at the bar again became interested in their drinks and conversation. At the table, Dave and Hattie were doing most of the talking, mostly wisecracking at Ester and Asher. They took it good-naturedly. More and more rounds of drinks were ordered. Soon, everyone was mellow; glowing in a different world untouched by the Fishbowl realities of their lives.

Hattie began to feel sick. Ester noticed it first and suggested that they go out in the air. They walked along City Island Road to where Dave's car was parked. Ester stayed with Hattie to let the cool night air blow on her friend while the boys crossed the street and went into the Fishbowl's parking lot.

"Looks like you made a hit, pardner," Dave said. "But I just wanna warn you, she ain't no push-over. She got a rough deal once. So you'll have to play her slow and easy and be nice to her. Inside a month's time, you'll have things your way."

"Jesus, that's like next year," Asher said as he slammed the door of the black sedan.

Dave wheeled the car onto the roadway. "Yeah, pardner! Come next year and she'll be jus' another gal to you," he said.

By the time they had pulled up in front of the house where the girls lived, Hattie was feeling herself again. She wisecracked to Asher, hoping he would be able to get work on time in the morning. Then she and Dave went into the vestibule of the apartment house, leaving Asher and Ester standing on the squat stoop two short steps up from the pavement.

It was an ordinary-looking, red brick tenement in 158th Street just east of Amsterdam Avenue. A cat jumped out of an ashen which stood near the stoop as a taxi came to a noisy halt at the corner. The cat knocked over an empty milk bottle.

Asher pointed to it and started to say something when Ester laughed.

"So what," she said.

She took the lapel of Asher's blue suit, pulled his face to hers and kissed him. She kissed him as one would kiss a relative. It was neither quick nor hot. But long enough for Asher to feel her very full lips, warm and soft against him. Gently and slowly she withdrew then, looking into his eyes. Then she pressed the vestibule door open with the back of her heel, turned, and ran up the long, narrow stairway.

Asher stood there, limp, for the next few minutes. Then he turned and walked off like an old man hurrying along when small children have laughed at him.

A week passed before Asher took Ester out again. Every

time he ran into her in the restaurant she had a date or was otherwise busy. Finally, Dave tipped him off that Ester would be free that Saturday night. He suggested to Asher that he meet her up at the other end of the Island.

They met in the Nickel Palace, a hot-dog stand at the corner of Sutherland Street and City Island Road, just across from the Honor Roll—a war memorial—in front of the suspension bridge that led to the Bronx mainland.

At Ester's request, they lingered along the bank of Pelham Bay near the bridge, until long after the last Fishbowl employee who might have been going home about that time had ridden by on the bus. Then they went to Sugar Hill, a region of the newer Harlem, so named when Negroes had first begun moving up on Washington Heights which overlooked the old Harlem settlement down in the "valley." But, as they say, the Hill is still there but the white folks took the sugar with them when they left, for the buildings in this neighborhood now show evidence of decay. All the high stoops of the old-fashioned brownstone, three-story, private houses have been hacked away to make room for store fronts.

When they came up out of the subway kiosk on St. Nicholas Ave. near 147th Street, the Hill was astir with a stream of people going in all directions.

Ester walked silently at Asher's side, holding firmly to his arm as they headed toward 145th Street. The two blocks that stretched ahead of them formed an electric-lit line of brilliance: bars, store-front churches, chop suey parlors, pool halls, food markets and barber shops.

Ester wanted to go to Paradise, one of the newer bars on Sugar Hill. The place had only recently celebrated the grand opening to which several thousand Harlemites had been invited by printed invitation (although it took only cash-in-hand to partake of its delights). The place "jumped like a revival meeting," to quote the barflies.

Paradise was an imposing gin mill at the corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and 145th Street where the crossstown streetcar rattled through on its way to the Bronx. From the outside the saloon was a huge expanse of glass brick, bordered with wide strips of shiny, black plate glass held together with bronze molding. So brilliant were the neon lighting effects that they snared passersby on the avenue three or four blocks away. This was Harry Schmell's gift to Harlem, where he had raised Scotch whisky to a kingdom and was charging seventy-five cents a shot for it.

As Asher and Ester were about to cross the threshold, a conked-hair zoot-suiter lounging in the doorway winked at her and stage-whispered to his crony, "That's my baby."

Ester threw her head back involuntarily and tightened her grasp on Asher's arm. "They ought to send this riffraff back to Georgia. These bastards just keep us back."

Before Asher could answer, Harry Schmell bounced in front of the couple and chased the hangers-on from the doorway, threatening to call the cops.

"Ah, Miss Ester, I thought you was never coming to my place." Turning to his wife who sat in the cashier's desk just to the left of the entrance he announced: "Here is Miss Ester and her friend from the Fishbowl."

Then the little manager ushered Ester and Asher to the corner booth farthest from the door. His brown eyes flashed. "The best in the house for you, Miss Ester."

Ester looked around with satisfaction. The red shade of the small lamp on the black, glossy table, the sea-green leatherette upholstery of the booth, the oak-paneled walls, the indirect-lighting fixtures sunk in long, narrow grooves around the room at the edge of the ceiling, gave a warm glow to the mural of Negro Greats on the walls just below. There were Joe Louis, Marian Anderson, Duke Ellington, George Carver.

"This place is ready," Asher said.

Ester gave him a smile. She had taken off her jacket, and he saw that she wore a pale blue summer print, cut low in

the front. He ordered twelve-year-old Scotch, and when it came her eyes sparkled.

"Oh my, you're so good to me."

"Because of this?" he asked carelessly, as though he never drank anything else.

"I was so surprised when you asked me to come out with you. I didn't think you'd ever want to see me again, the way I ran off the last time."

Conversation flowed easily. The drinks seemed to have put her in a vivacious mood, and she talked with a quick, witty intelligence. Asher made one or two mild jokes, and Ester laughed heartily over them. For the most part, however, he had only to listen and, of course, order drinks, while Ester rattled on.

The juke-box played continuously. It gave songs the "sharpies" selected to put their sweater-girls in a mellow mood, the songs that loosened up the proud-acting woman, the songs that brought mistiness to the eyes of the middle-aged—songs of tenderness, of longing, of heartbreak and of humor. Songs that were played over and over, night after night, in every Harlem bar.

The most popular song, the one that was played over and over, was "That Chippy's Not Ready for Pluckin'." Each time a husky-voiced "black troubadour" told of his confused reactions to life and love in this industrial society, the crowd chorused: "Send Her Back Down Home to Her Mother—Let Her Seer Her Up Some More—Then She'll Be Ready for Pluckin'."

Asher felt good. Ester seemed to have a knack for making a man believe he was the most important person on earth, the only one who mattered to her. She would make witty little remarks, behind which there were slightly veiled questions, intended to draw from her companion just what she seemed to want to know about him. Not the sort of questions that would call for a recital of his life's history, but ones that would tell her, if she was of a mind to play, whether or not it would prove a matter of playing with fire.

"I'll bet your chick's not too young to fry?" she asked.

"Are you?" Asher asked in return.

Ester studied Asher's face for a moment. Then a twinkle came into her large black eyes and they smiled with her lips. "You don't have any business being out on a limb alone. Not you," she said. "You betta get yours while the gettin' is good and get all you can get. 'Cause if you don't they'll get you and when they do they'll get you good and plenty."

"Is that the way you believe in treatin' your boy friend?" Asher asked.

"Boy friend? What's all this about?" she said, stopping short as if she were thinking. "You're not the jealous kind, are you?"

Again she looked into Asher's face, long and pensively. Asher felt a warm sensation churn inside him, and little beads of perspiration popped around the edges of his hair.

When they left the bar, Asher wanted to ride, for he was itching to get Ester into a cab and into his arms. But Ester wanted to walk. They way led north along St. Nicholas Avenue. So intently had Asher mapped out his little campaign to get Ester into his arms that he felt dismayed. As often happens when two people are new to each other, he did not allow his frustration to flare into open anger, but smothered his bewilderment like a person choking a yawn.

An early-morning breeze wafted gently in their faces as they walked. Ester strode along buoyantly, almost playfully pulling Asher by the arm. The Hill was still agog with people on the move.

Near the corner of 149th Street where St. Nicholas Place forks off at a tangent from the Avenue, there is a little park with small patches of green. As they reached the tiny square, Ester pulled Asher across the street and through this scrap of park. The eight or nine benches which lined both sides

(Continued on Page 68)





"I'm sure he didn't get very far. He was really pooped when he left!"

PHOTOS BY ARCHIE LEIBERMAN

four button man

Ivy is written
all over Sammy Davis, Jr.
in four-button
chalk-stripe worsted suit
custom-made for him
by Cy Martin of New York



*Sammy Davis hops on
the Ivy League bandwagon
but has ideas of his own, too*



AMERICA'S favorite funny man, Sammy Davis, Jr. is real serious on the subject of the well-dressed man. In step with Ivy League styling if not a bit ahead of trends, Sammy was a four-button man before most. Stoutly conservative, he shudders at loud, flashy clothes and keeps his wardrobe of 75 suits mostly in the grays and blacks. In all that represents a \$15,000 investment, but Sammy feels it's a necessity for anyone in the public eye. And to keep his apparel on the live side, he replenishes his wardrobe with about 25 new suits at \$200 each from New York's Cy Martin each year.

While going along with what's current in suits, Sammy is a style-setter in shoes. He has made a big thing out of his Congress Gators, a type of footwear that dates back to the turn of the century when popularized by U.S. senators who spent much time on their feet in gabfests. Sammy has a collection of about a dozen pairs, priced anywhere from \$45 up to \$95 for alligator leather. His other big luxury is cuff links, which he collects as a hobby. At last count he had 800 in all—one pair of them solid gold nuggets.



Italian motifs mixed with campus classics predominate in Sammy's traveling wardrobe. Tight trousers are the tailoring trend in Chinese silk mohair suit (extreme left). Copen blue is color of monogrammed lounging robe in Italian style. Congress Gators and oodles of cuff links are Sammy's weaknesses. Pipes for all week are a gift. For relaxing while listening, Sammy settles for conservative Ivy League gray suit.





"It was his last request so we had to grant it!"



introducing

the DUCHESS



of the MONTH

EVERY DUKE to the royal manor born most certainly deserves and delights in a duchess. And in every respect Eleanor Crews, a lass with an elegant air as well as a fascinating figure, makes a fitting duchess to please regal tastes of the gentry who savor the delights of this initial issue of DUKE. A Chicago miss who plays the plebian role of insurance company underwriter when she is not enacting the more exacting part of royalty, Eleanor is presented on these pages as a delectable duchess who leads the majestic procession of many more duchesses to come.

Our duchess



OUR DUCHESS for June is a lass with an intellectual bent, a girl whose relaxation is oil paintings and reading deep stuff like Edgar Allen Poe and Leo Tolstoy. But as a model, Eleanor Crews has also had a chance to sample the finer things in life and covets such items as a royal pastel mink to cover her shapely 34-22-35 figure when out for a night on the town. And after a night out, her idea of relaxation is a hot tub where she can lounge in bubbles and steam. Eleanor insists that she is really a home girl, even though she does like to get out and dance the mambo and cha-cha-cha when the whim suits her. She is good enough to have been a dance instructor at a Chicago studio. But she quit to indulge her artistic flair and went to the Art Institute to learn more about painting with oils.



has an ambition: a royal pastel mink



DUCHESS OF THE MONTH

eleanor crews





ART BY PAUL PINSON

UPSTAIRS

OUTSIDE of death and taxes, the paleface species *Americanus* is shook up by nothing as much as the sudden sight of a bountiful bust bounding in the breeze. But not so with our menfolk. While like any normal specimen of manhood, the colored gent with a gleam in his eye does admire a female with a well-upholstered upstairs, it is the lower level shopping that has more appeal for him. That is where he puts his money on the line and makes his choice of the choicest.

In the bosoms versus bottoms controversy, our males go along with Mother Nature who endowed most females with the most where it counts most—in the downstairs department.

But the past decade has seen some radical departures from this concept among free-with-their-hands, white and over-21 males. Where once feminine pulchritude was judged by such old-fashioned concepts as a charming smile, shapely legs and a well-rounded personality down South, beauty today seems measured in inches from right and around to left. The mammary mania has reached its peak, to abuse a cliché, with the “wow-whatta-pair” worship of such kingsize bosom queens as Jayne Mansfield and Anita Ekberg. What it adds up to is that a girl who has it upstairs doesn’t have to worry too much about her substructure any more.

But being a minority, the male of the species with a bit more complexion than the average has his own minority views on what female department takes top priority when taking inventory. The Negro man-about-town starts sizing up his lass from the aft end and then like a seasoned mariner, lets his eye wander topside and finally to the crow’s nest. To him a well-developed upstairs has its virtues but he is far more inclined to show more interest in downstairs vices.

While big bosoms may be big business for white gentry, as far as the cat on the corner this new boom is a big bust.

*In battle of bosoms versus bottoms,
our menfolk-about-town are caboose connoisseurs*

by BOOKER BRADLEY

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DOWNSTAIRS



Negro tastes in women prove the singular individuality of menfolk who inhabit the stretches from Harlem to Central Avenue. It comes down to basic, elemental urges that when spelled out in cheesecake makes chocolate preferable to vanilla. It's as old a concept as that wonderful line that proclaims: "The darker the berry, the sweeter the juice."

Likewise the man-in-the-know figures on a lot more action downstairs than up in the penthouse, despite all the glamour buildup. And as a consequence, the glamour pussies in the sepia section have attributes sometimes frowned upon by paler society. In polite society this is what is called "hippy," but the facts are that the tape measure doesn't get filled as much sideways as it does backwards.

But to the Negro man, what is called a surplus is strictly a desirable asset. When a lass is sized up walking down the avenue, it's usually bottom to top and back to front rather than vice versa. The key inspection comes when the male's eyes glances at what is displayed in the end section. In other words like a railroader, he watches the engine chug past and then tries to catch the caboose.

And there's something about catching up with a caboose that mirrors the thinking of the Negro male.

Such is the shape of things feminine in our world—and such is the shape our males prefer. And if the prettiest of darker hue, even on the Hollywood and Broadway scene, do not measure up to the mammary standard of the white world, our men fail to become disturbed, but rather see such as an advantage. Such lovelies as Lena Horne and Dorothy Dandridge, for instance, just do not stack up topside with the movie mammoths such as Jayne and Anita. But both have well-rounded assets in a Southern-most direction. When on stage they often make up for upstairs deficiencies with the varied gadgets contrived for that purpose, but out of the spotlight they prefer to display their more natural charms.

Of course, there are lasses who can match inch for inch even with the burlesque lollopaloosas like Evelyn West and Tempest Storm, both of whom bust the tape at over 40 inches. But these over-endowed ladies usually do not make too much headway in the sex appeal department and are categorized

with such big berthas as the Peters Sisters and June Richmond.

The earthy attitude of the man with cheek of tan is summarized by an Atlanta dentist, who contends he is somewhat of an expert on matters molar and mammary. "Those movie queens are worth looking at," he confided, "but when it comes to action, they're from nowhere. I have no interest in the dairy business, have had none since I left the farm. For me it's a simple choice when it comes to bosoms versus bottoms. I like the buildup to be in a more fundamental area."

A Detroit playboy, who goes by the popular cognomen of "sportsman," observes succinctly: "I once thought big bosoms went out with whalebone corsets. But here they are back, staring us in the face. I guess they're all right for fellows who never get past looking. But for action, you've gotta go down to where it really counts."

It very well may be that the to-the-rear-march movement of our menfolk will have some influence on an early return to fundamentals in female structural engineering. Ordinary good sense on matters anatomic cannot but make worship of the breast as much of a passing fancy as the Elvis Presley craze.

No question that the mammalia have their proper role in life for the care and feeding of the young but cleavage and curvature will never substitute for basics in the art of love. I have been at a loss to understand the current glorification of papillae in the white world and have been gratified to find that our masculine set has not been taken in.

What is perhaps most amazing about the anatomic detours that white men have taken in turning their attentions to the gland that holds so much interest for the infant, is that a peculiar sense of values has made the extremity of that gland somewhat taboo when it comes to pictorial reproduction. This is as applies to white ladies. Some legend seems to have come into circulation that a white man with a short fuse who glimpses the undraped bust from the side, top or bottom can very well maintain his self-control, but to glimpse the end thereof sets his passion off beyond the measure of reason.

But yet to see the same sector on a lady of darker hue seems to be quite all right and even the likes of such respectable family journals as Life, Holiday and even the ladies magazines often provide full and unhampered views of brown functional extremities without setting off any sexual explosions.

But the combination of white and pink is taboo.

Strange as this color complex seems, the very censorship that prohibits unimpeded views of the superstructure may have much to do with the current worship of same. It could be that such perverse tastes of the white male has something to do with what Philip Wylie has termed Momism.

Be that as it may, it would seem that our colored males have a much healthier sex attitude. To them the chest craze is udder nonsense.



"Before we let them get serious, find out if they have boats to go with the hats."



DUKE'S MALE TALES

IT happened in St. Alban's, that exclusive colored community on Long Island where status is attained by the price tag on a mink and the year of the Fleetwood you drive. A husband arrived home late one night to find his wife in bed with a nude man. He pulled a pistol out of his pocket and was about to shoot the interloper when his wife pleaded with him: "Don't shoot! Don't shoot! Who do you think bought us this house, got me my sable wrap and that beautiful Cadillac?"

"Are you the man?" asked the husband. The trembling naked one nodded. "In that case," roared the husband, as he reached into a dresser drawer, "get these pajamas on. You wanna catch cold?"



TWO gay gents of dubious sexual inclinations went to a night club together and watched a married couple bickering at an opposite table. The words flew fast and furiously until finally the exasperated husband got up and angrily left with a right at his wife's jaw.

With a smile, the first gay laid told the other: "See, I told you that mixed marriages don't work."

ON a visit "down home," two Harlemites checked into a hotel in a deep South city. After the bellboy had set down their bags, one of them inquired whether he would be able to line up some feminine company for them, preferably of white complexion.

"Sure," the bellboy confided. "I'll have some chicks up here in no time."

When the bellboy left, the rather timid one of the duo expressed some hesitation regarding their seeking pale-face companions. "After all, this is the South," he said. "This ain't like back in New York."

"Aw, what are you worried about," responded his friend. "All we're going to do is spend the night with 'em. We don't want to go to school with 'em."

BACK in the days when dukes were more than just men about town and had regal status in the European courts, their biggest complaint concerned ladies-in-waiting. They didn't mind the lasses of the court who curled up with a good book, but they resented those who were satisfied with one of the pages.

THE two GIs met in a West Coast training camp. "Where you from, man?" asked one.

"Mobile, Alabama," said the second.

"What street you live on in Mobile?"

"Main and Elm," said the first.

"That's where I live, too," said the second, "I live at 1195 Main."

"That's my address, too," said the first trainee. "Say, are you married?"

"Sure am, man," replied the other. "Married a chick named Arizona Walker."

"So did I," said the first soldier. "Hey, man, you reckon that we could be husbands-in-laws?"



A PARK AVENUE doctor got a desperate call from one of his wealthy patients on Riverside Drive in New York. "Doctor, my son has scarlet fever," the man said on the phone.

"Yes, I know," responded the doctor in trying to calm the man down. "I was by your house yesterday and looked at your son. He just has to rest and stay away from others in the house and . . ."

"But that's just it," said the father. "He kissed our Negro maid and I think she's got it."

"That's too bad. Now, we'll have to quarantine her . . ."

"But doctor, I'm afraid I've kissed the girl myself."

"That is a complication. It means you've probably contracted the disease, too."



"Yes, and since then I've kissed my wife."

"Damn it," exclaimed the doctor. "Now I'll catch it, too."

BACK from a small Southern Negro college for her summer vacation, a coed was being driven from the station to the farm where the family lived. The girl's father had sacrificed much for his daughter's education, mortgaging his place to the hilt. He was highly disturbed when his daughter whispered to him: "Paw, I have a confession to make—I ain't a virgin no more."

The farmer shook his head sadly and said: "Your Maw and I made all kinds of sacrifices to send you to college. And after all we done to get you a good education, you still say ain't."

The man pushed the button with his thumb and the blade sprang from the case.



ART BY JIM LENTINE

*If Vic wouldn't defend his wife's honor—
then it was no business of Hubert's either*

AUGUST AFTERNOON

by ERSKINE CALDWELL

VIC GLOVER awoke with the noonday heat ringing in his ears. He had been asleep for only half an hour, and he was getting ready to turn over and go back to sleep when he opened his eyes for a moment and saw Hubert's black head over the top of his bare toes. He stretched his eyelids and held them open in the glaring light as long as he could. Hubert was standing in the yard, at the edge of the porch, with a pine cone in his hand.

Vic cursed him.

The colored man once more raked the cone over Vic's bare toes, tickling them on the underside, and stepped back out of reach.

"What do you mean by standing there tickling me with that dad-burned cone?" Vic shouted at Hubert. "Is that all you can find to do? Why don't you get out in the field and do something to them boll weevils? They're going to eat up every boll of cotton on the place if you don't stop them."

"I surely hated to wake you up, Mr. Vic," Hubert said, "but there's a white man out here looking for something. He won't say what he's looking for, but he's hanging around waiting for it."

Vic sat up wide awake. He sat up on the quilt and pulled on his shoes without looking into the yard. The white sand in the yard beat the glare of the sun directly into his eyes

and he could see nothing beyond the edge of the porch. Hubert threw the pine cone under the porch and stepped aside.

"He must be looking for trouble," Vic said. "When they come around and don't say anything, and just sit and look, it's trouble they're looking for."

"There he is, Mr. Vic," Hubert said, nodding his head across the yard. "There he sits up against that water-oak tree yonder."

Vic looked around for Willie. Willie was sitting on the top step at the other end of the porch, directly in front of the strange white man. She did not look at Vic.

"You ought to have better sense than to wake me up while I'm taking a nap. This is no time of the day to be up in the summertime. I've got to get a little sleep every now and then."

"Boss," Hubert said, "I wouldn't never wake you up at all, not at any time, but Miss Willie just sits there high up on the steps showing her pretty and that white man has been out there whittling on a little stick a long time without saying nothing. I'm scared about something happening when he whittles that little stick clear through, and it's just about whittled down to nothing now. That's why I waked you up, Mr. Vic. Ain't much left of that little whittling-stick."

Vic glanced again at Willie and from her he turned to stare at the stranger sitting under the water-oak tree in his front yard.

The piece of wood has been shaved down to paper thinness.

Hubert shifted the weight of his body uneasily and said, "We ain't aiming to have no trouble today, is we?"

"Which way did he come from?" Vic asked, ignoring the question.

"I never did see him come from nowhere, Mr. Vic. I just looked up, and there he was, sitting against that water oak out yonder and whittling on that little stick."

Vic slid down over the quilt until his legs were hanging over the edge of the porch. Perspiration began to trickle down his neck as soon as he sat up.

"Ask him what he's after, Hubert."

"We ain't aiming to have no trouble today, is we, Mr. Vic?"

"Ask him what he wants around here," he said.

Hubert went almost halfway to the water-oak tree and stopped.

"Mr. Vic says what can he do for you, white-folks?"

The man said nothing. He did not even glance up from the little stick he was whittling.

Hubert came back to the porch.

"What did he say?" Vic asked him.

"He ain't said nothing yet, Mr. Vic. He acts like he don't hear me at all. You'd better go talk to him, Mr. Vic. He won't give me no attention. Appears to me like he's just sitting there and looking at Miss Willie on the high step. Maybe if you was to tell her to go in the house and shut the door, he might be persuaded to give some notice to what we say to him."

"Ain't no sense in sending her in the house," Vic said. "I can make him talk. Hand me that stillerdy."

"Mr. Vic, I'm trying to tell you about Miss Willie. Miss Willie's been sitting there showing her pretty and he's been looking at her a right long time, Mr. Vic. If you won't object to me saying so, Mr. Vic, I reckon I'd tell Miss Willie to go sit somewhere else, if I was you. Miss Willie ain't got much on today, Mr. Vic. Just only that skimpy outside dress, Mr. Vic. That's what I've been trying to tell you. I walked out there in the yard this while ago to see what he was looking at so much, and when I say Miss Willie ain't got much on today, I mean she's got on just only that skimpy outside dress, Mr. Vic. You can go look yourself and see if I'm lying to you, Mr. Vic."

"Hand me that stillerdy, I said."

Hubert went to the end of the porch and brought the heavy iron cotton-weighting steelyard to Vic. He stepped back out of the way.

Vic was getting ready to jump down into the yard when the man under the water-oak reached into his pocket and pulled out another knife. It was about ten or eleven inches long, and both sides of the handle were covered with hairy cowhide. There was a spring button in one end. The man pushed the button with his thumb, and the blade

sprang from the case. He began playing with both knives, throwing them up into the air and catching them on the backs of his hands.

Hubert moved to the other side of Vic. "Mr. Vic," he said, "I ain't intending to mess in your business none, but it looks to me like you got yourself in for a peck of trouble when you went off and brought Miss Willie back here. It looks to me like she's got up for a city girl, more so than a country girl."

Vic cursed him.

"I'm telling you, Mr. Vic, you ought to marry yourself a wife who hadn't ought to sit in front of a stranger, not even when she's wearing something more than just only a skimpy outside dress. I walked out there and looked at Miss Willie, and, Mr. Vic, Miss Willie is as bare as a plucked chicken, except for one little place I saw."

"Shut up," Vic said, laying the steelyard down on the quilt beside him.

The man under the water-oak closed the blade of the small penknife and put it into his pocket. The big hairy cowhide knife he flipped into the air and caught it easily on the back of his hand.

"Mr. Vic," Hubert said, "you've been asleep all the time and you don't know like I do. Miss Willie has been sitting there showing off her pretty a long time now, and he's got his pecker up. I know, Mr. Vic, because I went out there myself and looked."

Vic cursed him.

The man in the yard flipped the knife into the air and caught it behind his back.

"What's your name?" he asked Willie.

"Willie."

He flipped the knife again.

"What's yours?" she asked him, giggling.

"Floyd."

"Where are you from?"

"Carolina."

He flipped it higher than ever, catching it underhanded.

"What are you doing in Georgia?"

"Don't know," he said. "Just looking around."

Willie giggled, smiling at him.

Floyd got up and walked across the yard to the steps and sat down on the bottom one. He put his arms around his knees and looked up at Willie.

"You're not so bad-looking," he said. "I've seen lots worse-looking."

"You're not so bad yourself," Willie giggled, resting her arms on her knees and looking down at him.

"How about a kiss?"

"What would it be to you?"

"Not bad. I reckon I've had lots worse."

"Well, you can't get it sitting down there."

Floyd climbed the steps on his hands and feet and sat down on the next to the top step. He leaned against Willie, putting one arm around her waist and the other under her knees. Willie slid down the step beside him. Floyd pulled her to him, making a sucking sound with his lips.

Willie and Floyd moved down a step without loosening their embrace.

"Who is that yellow-headed sapsucker, anyhow?" Vic said. "I'll be dabbled if he ain't got a lot of nerve—coming here and fooling with Willie."

"You wouldn't do nothing to cause trouble, would you, Mr. Vic? I surely don't want to have no trouble today, Mr. Vic."

Vic glanced at the eleven-inch knife Floyd had stuck into the step at his feet. It stood on its tip, twenty-two inches high, while the sun was reflected against the bright blade and made a streak of light on Floyd's pants leg.

"Go over there and take that knife away from him and bring it to me," Vic said. "Don't be scared of him."

"Mr. Vic, I surely hate to disappoint you, but if you want that white-folk's knife, you'll just have to get it your own self. I don't aim to have myself all carved up with that thing, Mr. Vic. I surely can't accommodate you this time. If you want that white-folk's knife, you'll just be bound to get it your own self, Mr. Vic."

Vic cursed him.

Hubert backed away until he was at the end of the porch. He kept looking behind him all the time, looking to be certain of the exact location of the sycamore stump that was between him and the pine grove on the other side of the cotton field.

Vic called to Hubert and told him to come back. Hubert came slowly around the corner of the porch and stood a few feet from the quilt where Vic was sitting. Vic motioned for him to come closer, but he would not come an inch farther.

"How old are you?" Floyd asked Willie.

"Fifteen."

Floyd jerked the knife out of the wood and thrust it deeper into the same place.

"How old are you?" she asked him.

"About twenty-seven."

"Are you married?"

"Not now," he said. "How long have you been?"

"About three months," Willie said.

"How do you like it?"

"Pretty good so far."

"How about another kiss?"

"You just had one."

"I'd like another one now."

"I ought not to let you kiss me again."

"Why not?"

"Men don't like girls who kiss too much."

"I'm not that kind."

"What kind are you?"

"I'd like to kiss you a lot."

"But after I let you do that, you'd go away."

"No, I won't. I'll stay for something else."

"What?"

"To get the rest of you."

"You might hurt me."

"It won't hurt."

"It might."

"Let's go inside for a drink and I'll show you."

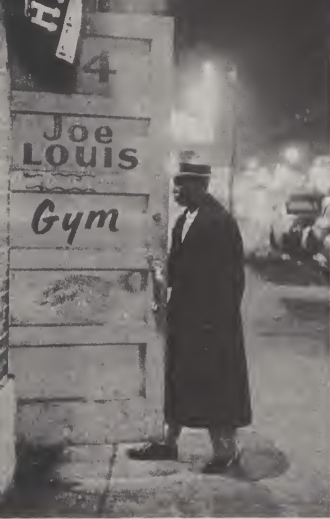
"We'll have to go to the spring for fresh water."

(Continued on Page 70)

Gym lights
glare down
on a lonely kid
silently
contemplating
his boxing future.



FIGHT FACTORY



*At Joe Louis Gym in Chicago,
dreams are born for young boxers
... and often dreams die, too*

Pre-bout
routine gets
Eddie Allen
in sullen
fighting
mood.



by DAN BURLEY

THE LONG LINE of naked brown, black, white and yellow boys pass in review under the murky light of the small medical room before the shirt-sleeved lanky, bespectacled doctor for the Illinois Athletic Commission. One by one the kids, trepidation tensing their faces, eligibility papers clutched in their sweaty paws, are sent up the floor for a thorough physical examination ranging through heart condition, eyesight and short arm inspection.

By the time they come to a halt before the elderly commission doctor, he

knows more about them than they could ever guess. "Here's a kid," Dr. Alfred Nathaniel Diggs says, "who'll be a sure winner some day. Got a terrific left, good build for a 160 pounder. Look at his walk, that swagger. Tough kid."

It is 7 o'clock. The boys come to the gym long before bout time to make sure they qualify for the night's bouts. Some of them won't make it, too much beef for the weight limit. They'll have to sit out their disappointment until matchmaker Larry Amadee gets around

to them again. But they'll be back to box at the Joe Louis Gym, because here is where dreams are born and where dreams die, too. Here is where the road begins and too often where it also ends abruptly. But youth never sees the end of the road while they can see the beginning.

So with dreams in their eyes, they become amateur boxers and at the Joe Louis Gym on Chicago's South Side, they pursue their dreams much as gladiators did 2,000 years ago in Roman arenas. For all the veneer of civiliza-





Eddie Allen offers a prayer before bout and then with advice of trainer Larry Amadee ringing in his ears, he is ready to tear into his man in Joe Louis Gym feature bout. After winning his fight, he relaxes before meeting his waiting girl friend.





tion, there is still a stark awareness of the primitive in this gym where animals lust for the sight and smell of blood are exposed in the raw. The dust and gore of Roman days is gone but the spectators still shout and shrill much as they did when men battled with axes. This is the year 1957 but the hunger for mayhem, for the sight of skilled brutality is still a basic human quality as it was in 50 B. C. The boxer remains the last vestige of human savagery given sanction to exhibit his prowess in the art of violence. The leather glove is the only concession to civilization, replacing the mailed fist.

And being men, the youths line up at the Joe Louis Gym to prove they can beat another human into insensibility. This, as in olden days, is still the shortest and least complicated road to fame and fortune. They have come out of alley fist fights and pool room brawls to try the path of glory that starts at the Joe Louis Gym. Among them is Eddie Allen.

Eddie is a stocky middleweight who came to Chicago as a migrant from Florida. As he goes before the doctor, the short, bull-shouldered 20-year-old swaggers up, his bullet-shaped head wagging from side to side in the manner of the pros. Confidence drips from him like the sweat that exudes from his sleek black hide under the harsh lights of the examining room. He has been through this before. Many times. Like when he battered his way to the 1957 semifinals of the Chicago Tribune Golden Gloves tournament, only to lose on a disqualification for landing a hard poke after the bell.

The fellows around the Joe Louis Gym classify Eddie as being pretty good. He's a former fruit picker in his native Florida. You don't make much money doing that, although you can exist on it and keep warm working under the hot sun. But Eddie was restless. So were his parents who made the decision to quit the Everglades country for the freedom of the North. In Chicago the family is making a new life for itself in a basement apartment on the West Side. Eddie goes to a trade school during the day and studies at night at home in a room warmed by a pot-bellied stove. But he knows that even with a trade, it may be a long time before he can buy a Cadillac, a home and the kind of suits his pals wear. One good feature bout as a boxer would get all those things.

So Eddie is trying a short cut, which leads through the street level door of the Joe Louis Gym up a winding iron staircase to a huge room on the second floor. The place was once an indoor miniature golf course and before that, a policy game headquarters and before that a factory storeroom. Now it is a full-blown fight factory. At one end wooden bleacher seats climb to the ceiling. At the other two regulation sized rings are filled with youngsters shadow-boxing, prancing with mincing

(Continued on Page 59)





THE LEGEND OF

It was a deuce of dims and brights ago
In a crib up on the Hill
That I dug Seven Skulls with just one roach
Gently copping their trill.

Now all were tall, each one six feet,
They were hipped to the jive, I swear;
They tabled all begs, all root, all root,
And made things bad for a Square.

They knocked a stash in a slammer quite wide
And passed the spark around
And each was cool with his parachute,
Mellow and ready to glide.

Seven times the roach crawled around,
It got shorter on its many trips
Until the spark could barely be seen
As the Skulls put it to their lips.

The air got hot (and the gauge was right)
As the Skulls kept blasting away,
And the weed got good (it was round and white)
And the Skulls decided to play.

"I want a chippie just from Mississippi,"
Shouted Skull Number One;
"And I want a chick built up like a brick,"
Number Two said when One was done.

SEVEN SKULLS

"Give me a hen who wants to sin,"
Declared Skull Number Three.
A silence ensued and it mellowed the mood,
As the four tried to agree.

Then Number Four said, "Dress mine in red,
With plenty of rear action drive."
With roach in mouth (he was from the far South),
Then spied my boy Number Five:

"I digs all plays and plants all lays,
Ol' Man, that ain't no jive;
I want my banter to really canter,
She must be a five by five!"

"I'm death on hicks," said Number Six.
"The chick I want is yellow;
Like Norwegian lard, she's gotta be hard,
Crazy, fine and mellow."

The roach was fading, its flame nearly gone,
The dim was almost black,
When my man Number Seven pops his chops
And laid this shot on the rack.

"For me," said he, "Give me my bread,
And sure as I'm a Skull,
I want one bright and damned near white,
Fine as an ocean gull!"

—DAN BURLEY

ART BY DON SWEIKERT

THE LAST WHITE MAN (Continued from page 16)

His wife stood tall and silent by him, her fluted lips pressed shut, and her large eyes wet and tragic. "Bring the paint," he said to her. And she lugged a gallon can of yellow paint across the field to where, at that moment, a trolley car was pulling up, with a fresh-painted sign on its front. TO THE WHITE MAN'S LANDING, full of talking people who got off and ran across the meadow, stumbling, looking up. Women with picnic boxes, men with straw hats, in shirt sleeves. The streetcar stood humming and empty. Willie climbed up, set the paint cans down, opened them, stirred the paint, tested a brush, drew forth a stencil, and climbed up on a seat.

"Hey, there!" The conductor came around behind him, his coin changer jangling. "What you think you're doing? Get down off there!"

"You see what I'm doing. Keep your shirt on."

And Willie began the stenciling in yellow paint. He dabbed on an *F* and an *O* and an *R* with terrible pride in his work. And when he finished it the conductor squinted up and read the fresh glinting yellow words: FOR WHITES: REAR SECTION. He read it again. FOR WHITES. He blinked. REAR SECTION. The conductor looked at Willie and began to smile.

"Does that suit you?" asked Willie, stepping down.

Said the conductor, "That suits me just fine, sir."

Hattie was looking at the sign from outside, and holding her hands over her breasts.

Willie returned to the crowd, which was growing now, taking size from every auto that groaned to a halt, and every new trolley car which squealed around the bend from the nearby town.

Willie climbed up on a packing box. "Let's have a delegation to paint every streetcar in the next hour. Volunteers?"

Hands leapt up.

"Get going!"

They went.

"Let's have a delegation to fix theater seats, roped off, the last two rows for whites."

More hands.

"Go on!"

They ran off.

Willie peered around, bubbled with perspiration, panting with exertion, proud of his energy, his hand on his wife's shoulder who stood under him looking at the ground with her down-cast eyes. "Let's see now," he declared. "Oh yes. We got to pass a law this afternoon; no intermarriages!"

"That's right," said a lot of people.

"All shoeshine boys quite their jobs today."

"Quittin' right now!" Some men threw down the rags they carried, in their excitement, all across town.

"Got to pass a minimum wage law," don't we?"

"Sure!"

"Pay them white folks at least ten cents an hour."

"That's right!"

The mayor of the town hurried up. "Now look here, Willie Johnson. Get down off that box!"

"Mayor, I can't be made to do nothing like that."

"You're making a mob, Willie Johnson."

"That's the idea."

"The same thing you always hated when you were a kid. You're no better than some of those white men you yell about!"

"This is the other shoe, Mayor, and the other foot," said Willie, not even looking at the mayor, looking at the faces beneath him, some of them smiling, some of them doubtful, others bewildered, some of them reluctant and drawing away, fearful.

"You'll be sorry," said the mayor.

"We'll have an election and get a new mayor," said Willie. And he glanced off at the town where up and down the street signs were being hung, fresh-painted: LIMITED CLIENTELE: Right to serve customer revokable at any time.

He grinned and slapped his hands. Lord! And streetcars were being halted and sections being painted white in back, to suggest their future inhabitants. And theaters were being invaded and roped off by chuckling men, while their wives stood wondering on the curbs and children were spanked into houses to be hid away from this awful time.

"Are we all ready?" called Willie Johnson, the rope in his hands with the noose tied and neat.

"Ready!" shouted half the crowd. The other half murmured and moved like figures in a nightmare in which they wished no participation.

"Here it comes!" called a small boy.

Like marionette heads on a single string, the heads of the crowd turned upward.

Across the sky, very high and beautiful, a rocket burned on a sweep of orange fire. It circled and came down, causing all to gasp. It landed, setting the meadow afire here and there; the fire burned out, the rocket lay a moment in quiet, and then, as the silent crowd watched, a great door in the side of the vessel whispered out a breath of oxygen, the door slid back and an old man stepped out.

"A white man, a white man, a white man . . ." The words traveled back in the expectant crowd, the children speaking in each other's ears, whispering, butting each other, the words moving in ripples to where the crowd stopped and the streetcars stood in the windy sunlight, the smell of paint coming out their opened windows. The whispering wore itself away and it was gone.

No one moved.

The white man was tall and straight, but a deep weariness was in his face. He had not shaved this day, and his eyes were as old as the eyes of a man can be and still be alive. His eyes were colorless; almost white and sightless with things he had seen in the passing years.

He was as thin as a winter bush. His hands trembled and he had to lean against the portway of the ship as he looked out over the crowd.

He put out a hand and half smiled, but drew his hand back.

No one moved.

He looked down into their faces, and perhaps he saw but did not see the guns and the ropes, and perhaps he smelled the paint. No one ever asked him. He began to talk. He started very quietly and slowly, expecting no interruptions, and receiving none, and his voice was very tired and old and pale.

"It doesn't matter who I am," he said. "I'd be just a name to you, anyhow. I don't know your names, either. That'll come later." He paused, closed his eyes for a moment, and then continued:

"Twenty years ago you left Earth. That's a long, long time. It's more like twenty centuries, so much has happened. After you left, the War came." He nodded slowly. "Yes, the big one. The Third One. It went on for a long time. Until last year. We bombed all of the cities of the world. We destroyed New York and London and Moscow and Paris and Shanghai and Bombay and Alexandria. We ruined it all. And when we finished with the big cities we went to the little cities and atom-bombed and burned them."

Now he began to name cities and places, and streets. And as he named them, a murmur rose up in his audience.

"We destroyed Natchez . . ."

A murmur.

"And Columbus, Georgia . . ."

Another murmur.

"We burned New Orleans . . ."

A sigh.

"And Atlanta . . ."

Still another.

"And there was nothing left of Greenwater, Alabama."

Willie Johnson jerked his head and his mouth opened. Hattie saw this gesture, and the recognition coming into his dark eyes.

"Nothing was left," said the old man in the port, speaking slowly. "Cotton fields, burned."

Oh, said everyone.

"Cotton mills bombed out—"

"Oh."

"And the factories, radioactive; everything radioactive. All the roads and the farms and the fields, radioactive. Everything." He named more names of towns and villages.

"Tampa."

"That's my town," someone whispered.

"Fulton."

"That's mine," someone else said.

"Memphis."

"Memphis. Did they burn Memphis?"

A shocked query.

"Memphis, blown up."

"Fourth Street in Memphis?"

"All of it," said the old man.

It was stirring them now. After twenty years it was rushing back. The towns and the places, the trees and the brick buildings, the signs and the churches and the familiar stores, all of it was

coming to the surface among the gathered people. Each name touched memory, and there was no one present without a thought of another day. They were all old enough for that, save the children.

"Laredo."

"I remember Laredo."

"New York City."

"I had a store in Harlem."

"Harlem, bombed out."

The ominous words. The familiar, remembered places. The struggle to imagine all of those places in ruins.

Willie Johnson murmured the words, "Greenwater, Alabama." That's where I was born. I remember."

Gone. All of it gone. The man said so.

The man continued, "So we destroyed everything and ruined everything, like the fools that we were and the fools that we are. We killed millions. I don't think there are more than five hundred thousand people left in the world, all kinds and types. And out of all the wreckage we salvaged enough metal to build this one rocket, and we came to Mars in it this month to seek your help."

He hesitated and looked down among the faces to see what could be found there, but he was uncertain.

Hattie Johnson felt her husband's arm tense, saw his fingers grip the rope.

"We've been fools," said the old man quietly. "We've brought the Earth and civilization down about our heads. None of the cities are worth saving—they'll be radioactive for a century. Earth is over and done with. Its age is through. You have rockets here which you haven't tried to use to return to Earth in twenty years. Now I've come to ask you to use them. To come to Earth, to pick up the survivors and bring them back to Mars. To help us go on at this time. We've been stupid. Before God we admit our stupidity and our evilness. All the Chinese and the Indians and the Russians and the British and the Americans. We're asking to be taken in. Your Martian soil has lain fallow for numberless centuries; there's room for everyone; it's good soil—I've seen your fields from above. We'll come and work it for you. Yes, we'll even do that. We deserve anything you want to do to us, but don't shut us out. We can't force you to act now. If you want I'll get into my ship and go back and that will be all there is to it. We won't bother you again. But we'll come here and we'll work for you and do the things you did for us—clean your houses, cook your meals, shine your shoes, and humble ourselves in the sight of God for the things we have done over the centuries to ourselves, to others, to you."

He was finished.

There was a silence of silences. A silence you could hold in your hand and a silence that came down like a pressure of a distant storm over the crowd. Their long arms hung like dark pendulums in the sunlight, and their eyes were upon the old man and he did not move now, but waited.

Willie Johnson held the rope in his



"I think I've found out what your trouble is."

hands. Those around him watched to see what he might do. His wife Hattie waited, clutching his arm.

She wanted to get at the hate of them all, to pry at it and work at it until she found a little chink, and then pull out a pebble or a stone or a brick and then a part of the wall, and once started, the whole edifice might roar down and be done away with. It was teetering now. But which was the keystone, and how to get at it? How to touch them and get a thing started in all of them to make a ruin of their hate?

She looked at Willie there in the strong silence and the only thing she knew about the situation was him and his life and what had happened to him, and suddenly he was the keystone; suddenly she knew that if he could be pried loose, then the thing in all of them might be loosened and torn away.

"Mister—" She stepped forward. She didn't even know the first words to say. The crowd stared at her back; she felt them staring. "Mister—"

The man turned to her with a tired smile.

"Mister," she said, "do you know Knockwood Hill in Greenwater, Alabama?"

The old man spoke over his shoulder to someone within the ship. A moment later a photographic map was handed out and the man held it, waiting.

"You know the big oak on top of that hill, mister?"

The big oak. The place where Willie's father was shot and hung and found swinging in the morning wind.

"Yes."

"Is that still there?" asked Hattie.

"It's gone," said the old man. "Blown up. The hill's all gone, and the oak tree too. You see?" He touched the photograph.

"Let me see that," said Willie, jerking forward and looking at the map.

Hattie blinked at the white man, heart pounding.

"Tell me about Greenwater," she said quickly.

"What do you want to know?"

"About Dr. Phillips. Is he still alive?"

A moment in which the information was found in a clicking machine within the rocket . . .

"Killed in the war."

"And his son?"

"Dead."

"What about their house?"

"Burned. Like all the other houses."

"What about that other big tree on Knockwood Hill?"

"All the trees went—burned."

"That tree went, you're sure?" said Willie.

"Yes."

Willie's body loosened somewhat.

"And what about that Mr. Burton's house and Mr. Burton?"

"No houses at all left, no people."

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SUGAR BROWN

by LANGSTON HUGHES

IT WAS a good job. Best job I ever had. Got it my last year in high school and it took me damn near through college. I'm sure sorry it didn't last. I made good money, too. Made so much I changed from City College to Columbia my sophomore year. Mr. Lloyd saw to it I got a good education. He had nothing against the Negro race, he said, and I don't believe he did. He certainly treated me swell from the time I met him till that high brown I'm gonna tell you about drove him crazy.

Now, Mr. Lloyd was a man like this: he had plenty of money, he liked his licker, and he liked his women. That was all. A damn nice guy—till he got hold of this jane from Harlem. Or till she got hold of him. My people—they won't do. They'd mess up the Lord if He got too intimate with 'em. Poor Negroes! I guess I was to blame. I should of told Mr. Lloyd she didn't mean him no good. But I was minding my own business, and I minded it too well.

That was one of the things Mr. Lloyd told me when I went to work there. He said, "Boy, you're working for me—nobody else. Keep your mouth shut about what goes on here, and

I'll look out for you. You're in school, ain't you? Well you won't have to worry about money to buy books and take your friends out—if you stay with me."

I ate and slept in. He had a four-room apartment, as cozy a place as you'd want to see, looking right over Riverside Drive. Swell view. In the summer when Mr. Lloyd was in Paris, I didn't have a damn thing to do but eat and sleep, and air the furniture. I got so tired that I went to summer school.

"What you gonna be, boy?" he said.

I said, "A dentist, I reckon."

He said, "Go to it. They make a hell of a lot of money—if they got enough sex appeal."

He was always talking about sex appeal and lovin'. He knew more dirty stories, Mr. Lloyd did! And he liked his women young and pretty. That's about all I'd do, spend my time cleaning up after some women he'd have around, or makin' sandwiches and drinks in the evenings. When I did something extra, he'd throw me a fiver any time. I made oodles o' money. Hell of a fine guy, Mr. Lloyd, with his forty-seven pretty gals—right out of the Copa or the pages of Esquire—sweet and willing.

His wife was paralyzed, so I guess he had to have a little outside fun. They lived together in White Plains. But he had a suite in the Hotel Roosevelt, and an office down on Broad. He says, when I got the job, "Boy, no matter what you find out about me, where I live, or where I work, don't you connect up with no place but here. No matter what happens on Riverside Drive, don't you take it no further."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Lloyd," I said. I knew where my bread was buttered. So I never went near the office or saw any of his other help but the chauffeur—and him a Jap.

Only thing I didn't like about the job, he used to bring some awfully cheap women there sometimes—big timers, but cheap inside. They didn't know how to treat a servant. One of 'em used to nigger and darkie me around, till I got her told right quietly one time, and Mr. Lloyd backed me up.

The boss said, "This is no ordinary boy, Lucille. True, he's my servant, but I've got him in Columbia studying to be a dentist, and he's just as white inside as he is black. Treat him right, or I'll see why." And it wasn't long before this Lucille dame was gone, and he had a little Irish girl with blue eyes he treated mean as hell.

Another thing I didn't like, though. Sometimes I used to have to drink a lot with him. When there was no women around and Mr. Lloyd would get one of his blue spells and start talking about his wife, and how she hadn't walked for eighteen years, just laying flat on her back, after about an hour of this, he'd want me to start drinking with him. And when he felt good from licker he'd start talking about women in general, and he'd ask me what they were like in Montreal and Havana, and Honolulu. He'd even had gypsy women in Spain, Mr. Lloyd.

Then he would drink and drink, and make me drink with him. And we'd both be so drunk I couldn't go to classes the next morning, and he wouldn't go to his office all day. About four o'clock he'd send me for some clam broth, so he could sober up. I'd give him an alcohol rub, then he'd

Pauline grabbed the whiskey bottle and hit him on the head.

ART BY JIME LENTINE

go off to the Roosevelt and have dinner with the society folks he knew. I might not see him again for days. But he'd slip me a greenback usually.

"Boy, you'll never lose anything through sticking with me! Here," and it would be a fiver.

Sometimes I wouldn't see Mr. Lloyd for weeks. Then he'd show up late at night with a chippie, and I'd start making drinks and sandwiches and smoothing down the bed. Then there's be a round o' women, six or eight different ones in a row, for days. And me working my hips off keeping 'em fed and licked up. This would go on till he got tired, and had the blues again. Then he'd beat the hell out of one of 'em and send her off. Then we'd get drunk. When he sobered up he'd telephone for his chauffeur and drive to White Plains to see his old lady, or down to the hotel where he lived with a secretary. And that would be that.

He had so damn much money, Mr. Lloyd. I don't see where folks get so much cash. But I don't care so long as they're giving some of it to me. And if it hadn't been for this colored woman, boy, I'd still be sitting pretty.

I don't know where he got her. Out of one of the Harlem night clubs, I guess. They came bustin' in about four o'clock one morning. I heard a woman laughing in the living-room, and I knew it was a colored laugh—one of ours. So deep and pretty, it couldn't have been nothing else. I got up, of course, like I always did when I heard Mr. Lloyd come in. I broke some ice, and took 'em out some drinks.

Yep, she was colored, all right. One of those golden browns, like an Alabama moon. Swell-looking kid. She had the old man standing on his ears. I never saw him looking so happy before.

She kept him laughing till daylight, hugging and kissing. She had a hot line, that kid did, without seemin' serious. He fell for it. She hadn't worked in Harlem taverns for nothing. Jesus! She was like gin and vermouth mixed. You know!

We got on swell, too, that girl and I. "Hy, pal," she said when she saw me bring out the drinks. "If it ain't old Harlem, on the Drive."

She wasn't a bit hinky like so many folks when they're light-complexioned and up in the money. If she hadn't been the boss's girl, I'd have tried to make her myself. But she had a black boy friend—a number writer on 135th Street—so she didn't need me. She was in love with him. Used to call him up soon as the boss got in the elevator bound for the office.

"Can I use this phone?" she asked me that very morning.

"Sure, Madam," I answered.

"Call me Pauline," she said, "I ain't white." And we got on swell. I cooked her some bacon and eggs while she called up her sweetie. She told him she'd hooked a new butter and egg man with bucks.

Well, the days went on. Each time, the boss would show up with Pauline. It looked like blondes didn't have a break

—a sugar-brown had crowded the white babies out. But it was good for Mr. Lloyd. He didn't have the blues. And he stopped asking me to drink with him, thank God!

He was crazy about this Pauline. Didn't want no other woman. She kept him laughing all the time. She used to sing him bad songs that didn't seem bad when she was singing them, only seemed funny and good natured. She was nice, that girl. A gorgeous thing to have around the house.

But she knew what it was all about. Don't think she didn't. "You've got to kid white folks along," she said to me. "When you're depending on 'em for a living, make 'em *think* you like it."

"You said it," I agreed.

And she really put the bee on Mr. Lloyd. He bought her everything she wanted, and was as faithful to her as a husband. Used to ask me when she wasn't there, what I thought she needed. I don't know what got into him, he loved her like a dog.

She used to spend two or three nights a week with him—and the others with her boy-friend in Harlem. It was a hell of a long time before Mr. Lloyd found out about this colored fellow. When he did, it was pure accident. He saw Pauline going into the movies with him one night—a tall black good-looking guy with a diamond on his finger. And it made the old man sore.

That same night Mr. Lloyd got a ring-side table at a club in Harlem. When Pauline came dancing out in the two o'clock revue, he called her, and told her to come there. He looked mad. Funny, boy, but that rich white man was jealous of the colored guy he had seen her with. Mr. Lloyd jealous of a jig! Wouldn't that freeze you?

They had a hell of a quarrel that morning when they came to the apartment. First time I ever heard them quarrel. Pauline told him finally he could go to hell. She told him, yes, she loved that black boy, that he was the only boy she loved in the wide world, the only man she wanted.

They were all drunk, because between words they would drink licker. I'd left two bottles of Haig & Haig on the tray when I went to bed. I thought Pauline was stupid, talking like that, but I guess she was so drunk she didn't care.

"Yes, I love that colored boy," she hollered. "Yes, I love him. You don't think you're buying my heart, do you?"

And that hurt the boss. He'd always thought he was a great lover, and that women liked him for something else besides his money. (Because most of them wanted his money nobody ever told him he wasn't so hot. His girls all swore they loved him, even when he beat them. They all let him put them out. They hung on till the last dollar.)

But that little yellow devil of a Pauline evidently didn't care what she said. She began cussing the boss. Then Mr. Lloyd slapped her. I could hear it way back in my bedroom where I was sleeping, with one eye open.

In a minute I heard a crash that brought me to my feet. I ran out,

through the kitchen, through the living-room, and opened Mr. Lloyd's door. Pauline had thrown one of the whiskey bottles at him. They were battling like hell in the middle of the floor.

"Get out of here, boy!" Mr. Lloyd panted. So I got. But I stood outside the door in case I was needed. A white man beating a Negro woman wasn't so good. If she wanted help, I was there. But Pauline was a pretty tough little scrapper herself. It sounded like the boss was getting the worst of it. Finally, the tussling stopped. It was so quiet in there I thought maybe one of them was knocked out, so I cracked the door to see. The boss was kneeling at Pauline's feet, his arms around her knees.

"My God, Pauline, I love you!" I heard him say. "I want you, child. Don't mind what I've done. Stay here with me. Stay, stay, stay."

"Lemme out of here!" said Pauline, kicking at Mr. Lloyd.

But the boss held her tighter. Then she grabbed the other whiskey bottle and hit him on the head. Of course, he fell out. I got a basin of cold water and put him in bed with a cloth on his dome. Pauline took off all the rings and things he'd given her and threw them at him, lying there on the bed like a ghost.

"A white bastard!" she said. "Just because they pay you, they always think they own you. No white man's gonna own me. I laugh with 'em and they think I like 'em. How could I like 'em?"

She put on her coat and hat and went away.

When the boss came to, he told me to call his chauffeur. I thought he was going to a doctor, because his head was bleeding. But the chauffeur told me later he spent the whole day driving around Harlem trying to find Pauline. He wanted to bring her back. But he never found her.

He had a lot of trouble with that head, too. Seems like a piece of glass or something stuck in it. I didn't see him again for eight weeks. When I did see him, he wasn't the same man. No, sir, boy, something had happened to Mr. Lloyd. He didn't seem quite right in the head. I guess Pauline dazed him for life, made a fool of him.

He drank more than ever and had me so high I didn't know B from Bull's Foot. He had his white women around again, but he'd got the idea from somewhere that he was the world's greatest lover, and that he didn't have to give them anything but himself—which wasn't so cool for them little Broadway gold diggers who wanted diamonds and greenbacks.

Women started to clearing out early when they discovered Mr. Lloyd had gone romantic—and cheap. There were scandals and fights and terrible goings on when the girls didn't get their presents and checks. But Mr. Lloyd just said, "To hell with them," and drank more than ever, and let the pretty girls go. He picked up women off the streets and then wouldn't pay them, cheap as they are. Late in the night he would

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titan of the talk trade



Al Benson plays role of "Midnight Gambler," popular tune on his Chicago radio show.

*With bad English and "down home" diction,
Al Benson began a \$250 million Negro industry in radio*

by ELLIS WATERS

ANY TIME of day or night anywhere in America you cannot twist your radio dial without hearing a Negro disc jockey. Every hour around the clock between Harlem's Lenox Avenue and Los Angeles' Western Boulevard there is a rich, accented colored voice on the air. It is the voice of the newest Negro industry: a \$250 million business based on talk. These are the glib, garrulous disc jockeys who get into millions of American homes from

luxury Sugar Hill penthouse apartments to dilapidated Mississippi shotgun shacks, who command audiences in rickety jitney taxicabs and air-conditioned Cadillacs, in drafty one-nighter cabaret dressing rooms and lonely U.S. military camps.

Some of the talk makes your mouth water with the suggestiveness of fried chicken, hot biscuits and milk gravy. Some of it mirrors the thinking of the urbane black boulevardier who



Whether at home relaxing or on air, Al Benson is model of sartorial elegance in keeping with his new-found opulence since he became a \$100,000-a-year disc jockey.



inhabits the smart cocktail lounges and fancies modern jazz chamber groups but frowns at the gut-stringed blues of a barbecue-scented Saturday night juke joint on the edge of town. Some of it is as "down home" as cornbread and turnip greens.

Today more than 500 Negro deejays are employed in radio. Some have become rich on the air; some are still struggling. Some are on but once a week; others ride the turntables for six hours a day week in and out.

All of them either directly or indirectly owe their presence on radio to a Mississippi-born Negro named Arthur Leaner.

It was 13 years ago that the onetime storefront preacher first spoke on the air waves under the name of Al Benson and the echoes are still reverberating in the radio world. Today he is still the titan of the talk trade, a man who spends three hours daily speaking into a microphone to earn upwards of \$100,000 yearly.

Benson brought something new to radio: a basic, earthy level of communication with ordinary people tired of Harvard accents and precise diction coming out of their sets. His distressing grappling with words over two syllables once brought laughs of derision from many but they could not laugh away his ability to reach out across the air and win vast audiences of listening Negro women and teenage girls.

Even today one of the big questions in Chicago radio circles is: "How does that Al Benson continue to get away with it? The man is illiterate, yet he's got the biggest radio show in town."

Many upper class South Siders sneer at him because the average literate Chi-

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FIGHT FACTORY (Continued from Page 49)

steps, snorting through sniffing nostrils as they slow-drag around imaginary opponents.

There is the stink of liniment, of heavy dust mixed with the odor of masculine sweat and you know this is a place for men. Small electric lights close to the wall illuminate with a warm glow the pictures placed side by side in frames. Some are champions, some are bums, but they are men who have fought and won, honors somewhere in the busy world of pugilism. Some are dead, some are still fighting, others have quit. For them the season in the sun in most cases was brief but glorious. There are yellowed pictures behind cracked glass of forgotten boxers. Some of them are winos, bleary-eyed drifters with tin ears and scrambled brains, talking out of the corners of their mouths, packing paunches where once their bellies were sleek and taut from superb conditioning. A lot of them can be found around the gym, hanging around hoping they'll get the nod to be seconds or water boys. They are the guys with the towel and bucket who climb into the ring between rounds to counsel or revive their boy.

There are pictures or cartoons of Joe Louis, of Rocky Marciano, and the new guy on top of the heavies, young Floyd Patterson. There's also Johnny Bratton, the handsome, curly-headed "Golden Boy" who not long ago topped the welterweight division as world champion, but who today is in an Illinois mental hospital. He's only 29, but he went the route most successful boxers traverse from Jack Johnson through Joe Louis—the path lined with pretty women, fast automobiles, night clubs, false friends, crooked handlers, liquor, over-indulgence—a perilous route but one that is always crowded with travelers.

Eddie Allen swaggers past these pictures, scarcely glancing at what could be a textbook for his and the future of others seeking ring fame. Spotting his manager-trainer Larry Amadee, Eddie makes like a wino, weaving and stumbling about as if he is in an alcohol-induced stupor. Amadee, his watchful old eyes alerted, heaves up his chest and you hear guttural sounds of exasperation come from his very soul. Larry has had his fill of drunken boxers and he can't stand them. His mouth opens to read Allen off when Eddie suddenly straightens up and smiles. Amadee fails to see the joke and snarls: "You little son of a bitch, you think that's funny, huh?"

It's early in the gym schedule as Allen goes to the dressing room where guys wearing berets and some with chin whiskers sit around. It's hard to tell who are fighters and who are hangers-on. A big hulking carcass of a man showing the evidences of having caught too many punches, passes and somebody makes a good natured remark at him. He growls, "Whadda ya mean? . . . I been in the ring. I had mine. Why don't you get in there and get yours?" He speaks in bell-cose tones. A guy standing near by, whis-

pers, "Better leave him be; he's a touch hog." The big guy stalks out proudly and the way he walks tell you he's proud because he once proved he was all man.

Fighters begin coming into the dressing room after their physical exams. All of them are young—Negro, Polish, Irish, Puerto Rican, Jewish, Mexican, Italian, Spanish. They make you wonder how human beings could vary so much in weight, height, color and aggressiveness. There are those with fresh boyish faces unmarked by the ravages of ring warfare and there are those with button-noses and cauliflower ears, scarred eyes and lips thickened from blows from padded mitts.

Outside, the crowd has started coming in. Pat Brooks, brother of Joe Louis, is on the door selling tickets while a girl cashier rings up the money. The audience is mostly male, but some fellows bring their wives or girl friends for an evening of sport.

Some of the crowd goes back to the medical room to watch with morbid curiosity as Dr. Diggs stethoscopes the fighters. They size up the naked youths much as touts watching race horses going to post. Here and there furtive bets are made. There is the jangle of coin and the rustle of bills as "experts" heatedly say: "Put your money where your mouth is, man." But those bets are on "points," or what some fighter did dozens of years ago like what kind of punch Henry Armstrong used to beat Barney Ross or how much did Joe Louis weigh for his second bout with Billy Conn. The crowd brings in a new smell—fresh sweat and scented soap and the perfume from "processed" hair.

In a corner outside the medical room, Larry Amadee is talking to Eddie Allen. He takes time out to tell a bystander: "Eddie's a good kid. All he's got to do is stop listening to those fellers who think they know something and don't." Larry can talk and with authority. Now 58, he spent 43 years in boxing to become one of the game's greatest and

most famous trainers. He's been in the corner of most of them—Louis, Armstrong, Bratton, Tony Zale, Sugar Ray Robinson, Kid Chocolate, and countless others who today form a tapestry of half-forgotten glories in the Amadee book of memories. Born in 1898 in New Orleans, Larry began boxing as a battle royaler. "We didn't have any amateur clubs then," he recalls. "We boxed in the French Quarter or across the Mississippi River in Algiers."

It was an Amadee idea that created the new Joe Louis Gym. Larry shopped around and found a friend, Al Stewart, who is a bigtime beer distributor, with a big garage-like building and a vacant upstairs on his hands. Larry put in four or five big bags and a speed ball for his boxers, closed off a corner for dressing room and office space, then went shopping to fulfill the rest of his dream for a weekly amateur fight club. Stewart had given him 30 days to find a sponsor.

He came up with a resort owner, Andrew Hodo, a 47-year-old man-about-town from Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Hodo and Pat Brooks worked out the deal to acquire the magic name of Joe Louis for the new club and the first fights were staged in January of this year. Everything in the club shows the Amadee handiwork. The graying trainer, who once earned fantastic money giving massages and rubdowns to such famous hoodlum kings as Al Capone and Machinegun Jack McGurn, worked out a tieup with the AAU.

When Amadee talks to a kid boxer, he knows what he's talking about. He has no training in formal psychology, but he's a master at handling men. He weaves a spell over his boys, the spell of centuries. He instills his gladiator for the night with confidence as he tells him:

"Look, kid, I'm your manager, right? I been in the ring, right? I had my share, right? Listen to me when I tell you things, kid. Listen to me, kid, he can't hurt us. He's just as scared of us as we are of him. We can take his punches and we're gonna give him a helluva lot of it back, right?"

The youthful gladiator succumbs to the Amadee-inspired trance and he is ready to come out fighting, to engage in the oldest sport in the world, a sport that no doubt was popular in the Stone Age when cave men settled their quarrels not unlike the warriors at the Joe Louis Gym. Today the warrior is Eddie Allen, the boy who wants to find the short cut to a Cadillac. And the man who is showing him the way is a man who himself could not find it. But Larry Amadee knows how to work the spell, a spell he has cast on hundreds of hopeful Eddie Allens through the years, hungry and fat years, triumphant and defeated years. It is the spell that makes men out of boys, that makes them want to kill and above all to win.

To the victor as in days of yore, belong the spoils—Cadillacs and pretty women, \$250 suits and elegant apartments, fame and fortune beyond the dreams of any Roman emperor or gladiator.





"Oh, isn't he cute . . . He's trying to tell us something!"

OUR MEN LIKE IT STRAIGHT (Continued from Page 13)

along the Mississippi gulf coast where bootlegging is endemic and provides much Negro income, it was once regarded as effeminate not to down a half pint of good "corn" without water or coke to chase it. Alas, but few of those rugged individualists are left.

During Prohibition, to be sure, strange deviations were observed during that national affliction in Southern regions where and when the "corn" was not potable or obtainable. For a dozen years Sterno, rubbing alcohol, Pyrene fluid and Jake (tincture of Jamaica ginger, to you) were substituted to the enrichment of "druggists" who sold little else save assorted "tonics." Only one endowed with the most rugged physique could guzzle such stuff without a coke mixer.

The rubbing alcohol was poured in a shallow cooking pan, ignited and allowed to burn until the flame changed color. This, was called "burning the death off it." Wisely mixed with a coke to make it potable, it was guaranteed to cure the most persistent case of insomnia. A Jake highball caused the knees to buckle and tears to stream. So many became paralyzed from that addiction that the victims organized a Society of Jake Victims to sue careless manufacturers for damages. In the North strange concoctions were made with malt syrup, corn meal, yeast cake and anything else available. If not so tasty, they at least gave the desired kick to enliven Saturday night rent parties and wash down the pigs' feet. Happily, the end of Prohibition came, and the brother went back to his straight liquor.

Leaving our urban Aryan areas and entering the Black Belts, one also leaves behind the eccentric cuisines specializing in camouflaging dishes so you cannot tell what they are. You emerge into a world of pork chops, steaks, fried chicken, hot rolls, ribs, corn bread, fried fish, rice and gravy, hominy, greens, Brunswick stew, corn-on-the-cob, apple pie, sweet potatoes, chitterlings, pig nose with hopping john, Virginia ham and French fries. Save for the "Chinese" dishes actually invented for American consumption, the colored brother prefers to eat his food straight. When he gets down to eating, he wants to know what he's eating.

Although he works with Jews, Poles, Germans, Italians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and other good Americans, it is notable that he has not acquired their eating habits. It is a rare Negro restaurant that features any of these national dishes. It is harder to get gefulte fish in a Lenox Avenue restaurant than to get barbecued chicken in Bavaria, food experts in the press to the contrary notwithstanding.

And what has forty years of sexual freedom wrought among the colored brethren? Has the Negro swung over from the straight and narrow path of sexual orthodoxy and acquired strange tastes and manners from the white brother here and abroad? Has he maintained his tradition of sexual promiscuity as a by-product of slavery? Has

he preserved his pristine purity of approach? Or has he succumbed to what the French call "the trifles of the door"?

To a certain extent, of course, he has inevitably become "sophisticated," having learned some pleasant amorous diversions from dollar-seeking damsels in Paris, Rome, London, Frankfurt, Teheran and Tokio. Some could not shake off these memories upon return to Dallas, Detroit, New York and Atlanta. Many sable overseas veterans returned with "new" ideas of love-making and proceeded to brainwash their sweethearts into sharing them—and succeeded! In these directions there has been a notable change in public taste.

Similarly, while the men were away making the world safe for democracy, some ladies heard about what made Sappho great, and sought to surpass her. While contacting Levantine habits abroad taught some of the warriors that masculine company can be wonderful, their sweethearts at home sometimes learned new ways of keep the home fires burning without violating their vows. Industriously imitating their white mentors as many colored are wont to do, it would have been most strange if a considerable minority of Negroes under wartime stress had not occasionally yielded to temptation.

Notwithstanding these derelictions, it is a tribute to the colored brother's stubbornness, lack of curiosity, conservatism or primitiveness, that in the main he still prefers to take his sex life straight. This is indicated by the different reactions of colored and white to revelations of "sophisticated" sexual practices. Where the Nordics greet such news with smiles or shrugs of indifference, Negroes express aversion, revulsion or condemnation. What others regard as delightful innovation, he still thinks is a sin and shame. True, this may sometimes be sheer hypocrisy, but mainly it is sincere.

There has been less time and less money for frills among most colored folk than among most whites, less leisure for amorous play, greater pressure for sheer survival, more social instability with accompanying worries, less time for those amenities which are implicit in the traditional Caucasian chivalric code. There is little time left after working all day in the white folk's kitchens and laundries, and little energy to do more than eat, drink and play in the most simple ways. The arrangements, decorations, culinary and romantic rituals implicit in what is called good living must be by-passed.

Only recently has an appreciable upper class evolved among Negroes similar to that among whites. The standard of recreational and amusement facilities in the Black Belt are still largely set by the primitives comprising over 90 per cent of the group. Even where an upper class evolves, tastes change far more slowly than status.

So amorous dalliance in Darktown is generally straight. True, this may be born of necessity, but it is also born of tradition. A famous American writer once observed that "the American Ne-

gro is the repository of Anglo-Saxon culture" and that this culture would continue even if all the white people disappeared. He has absorbed the puritanism and sexual conservatism, largely because his class mobility has been retarded by social ostracism. But even the poor whites resort to sexual practices that most Negroes scorn.

By the same token the purest French is spoken in Haiti, the best of Spanish culture is preserved in Latin America, while the Barbadians are more British than the British. But except for music, dancing and folklore, the Negro's African culture was largely wiped out by his savage apprenticeship in slavery.

However, all streets have two sides. Have the whites brainwashed the blacks and forced upon them an alien culture? Then the Negroes have done likewise. The sexual promiscuity once regarded as characteristic of Negroes, has now become a white American folkway. Negro music once despised as reminiscent of slavery and savagery, is not only reputed to be the only genuine national music but is exported by the State Department to make international goodwill for this country. Bereft of the compositional intricacies of European "classics," it has won the whites everywhere with its straight, primitive forms.

Most American whites today favor the straight diet which Negroes have long preferred, and milady on Sutton Place or Chicago's North Shore gets down with those barbecued ribs and chitterlings once sneered at as low class Negro food. By the time the white Joneses toil through traffic to their split-level home in the suburbs after a tough day in the office, they are willing to dispense with European trimmings decreed for bourgeois gourmets, empty a can or frozen food packet into the skillet and eat it straight, minus the too-expensive maid and cook.

Practically gone now are the waltz, schottische, polka and square dances so dear to grandma. Instead the whites have eagerly taken up with enthusiasm every Negro dance invented in the slave quarters and dives from Buenos Aires to Baltimore and taken from African jungle rites, whether tango, samba, meringue or hot cha cha. From the same sources they have accepted ragtime, blues and calypso, and made them "respectable." The drawing rooms of the white elite are decorated with once-outlawed African jungle drums. And finally, the traditional Negro garb, overalls, has moved from the Southern farms and levees to our centers of learning and recreation in the form of blue jeans. Thus, the white brother has been going straight with a vengeance.

How long, then, will it be before the Negro decides to copy his white mentors and become sexually sophisticated. Or, to put it another way, how long before the two groups change places? Will they both go exotic and turn to strange "trifles of the door" or will the whites copy the Negroes in sex as in other things, and go straight?

Here is something for such pundits as Eastland and Talmadge to ponder! ▽



Dance dramatizes basic passions of a lost weekend in sex

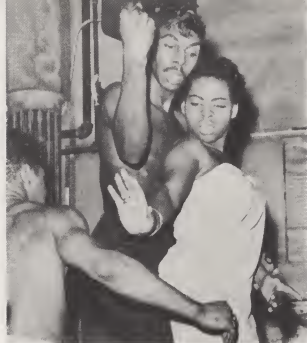
Performers get carried away by emotionalism of sex theme in performance of Ted Williams Dancers at Club Baron in Harlem.



The Primitives



FOR OUTRIGHT debauchery and sheer sin, few literary works can match the frenzied boudoir adventures in Chester Himes' newest novel, "The Primitive." It is a lost weekend in which two lovers immerse themselves in sex. Much of the same feeling is encompassed in the intense, fierce emotions expressed in the choreography of a band of Harlem dancers who specialize in what is called "primitive." Elemental passions are given expression by the Ted Williams Dancers who perform in the voodoo tradition to the beat of congo drums. They put into dance steps much of what Himes has put into his earthy novel, "The Primitive."



Yells of crowd spur dancers
to heightened passions in depicting
primitive motif that is theme
of Ted Williams Dancers.



street was deserted, as if the figures had dissolved instantaneously into the night. He found himself alone. A police squad car crept up beside him at the curb, its red light blinking, the spotlight searching down the street.

"Where you going, boy?" an officer addressed him.

His heart stuck in his throat. "Just walking."

"You don't belong down here. You'll get hurt."

"Go over on Cedar," another said. "Get some clean stuff. This here's filth."

"You know Billie on Thackeray? She's got some nice girls. Treat yourself big. Tell her I sent you—Monahan."

"I'm not looking for a girl," he denied. "I'm going to my father's church."

There was a moment of silence. "He's going to church," the second officer said.

"Don't let me catch you on this street again," said the first officer as the car moved off.

"No, sir."

He hastened over to Thackeray, knocking at doors indiscriminately, asking for Billie. Some of the occupants invited him in, others chased him away. Finally he found the right house. Billie let him enter a pitch-dark foyer.

"Mr. Monahan sent me."

"Mister?" She had a heavy masculine voice.

"Officer."

"What do you want?"

"I—well—I want to see a girl."

"We don't have no girls here."

"Oh! Well, I—"

For a fleeting instant the light came on. He was blinded in the glare. Then it was darker than before.

"All right, baby."

She ushered him into the living room. Soft light spilled on luxurious furnishings. It resembled his idea of an opium den.

"Set down, baby. You wanna buy a pint?"

She was a big, dark, thickset woman with a heavy mustache. Her blouse was open and he noticed hairs growing from between her breasts.

"Yes, I want—I want a pint."

"It's five dollars."

He fished for the money. "I want a pretty girl—a nice girl," he stammered.

She looked at him curiously. "All my girls are nice and pretty."

After she'd gone there was no sound from the house or from the street. He felt entombed in a sense of reality. He wondered what would happen when he went to bed. For a moment he was frightened. Then a young woman clad in a transparent negligee entered silently, bearing a tray with the whiskey and setup.

"My name is Margaret," she said affectedly, giving him an artificial smile. "What might be yours?"

"Oh! Charles is mine," he replied.

Placing the tray on the coffee table with an air of formality, she appeared astonishingly shy. "And how would you like yours?"

Dark curly hair fell about her shoulders. Her complexion was like coffee and cream; her eyes ringed with mascara. He could see the outline of her legs through the chiffon negligee. He thought her the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen.

"I—" he choked. "Just like yours."

She mixed the drinks and came over and sat beside him, holding her glass with the little finger extended in what she thought was a gesture of refinement. Billie had instructed her to act like a nice girl. "You're cute," she said.

Her soft, perfumed contact heightened his excitement unbearably. He gulped his drink, coughed and strangled.

"Don't rush, baby, we got all night."

Her voice seemed to caress him.

He stole another look at her and swallowed hard. "I'm ready now," he blurted.

She laughed. "All right, baby."

Upstairs in the perfumed blue room a soft pink light bathed her naked body. She screened herself with her hands. He throbbed with exquisite tension, his blood on fire. His fingers turned into thumbs; he couldn't undo his buttons. She helped remove his shirt.

When she came to the brace, she exclaimed, "Oh, your back's hurt!"

"Not much," he gasped, panting, throbbing like he'd burst.

Before turning toward the bed, she said, "That'll be five dollars, baby."

He gave her ten dollars in his excitement. She smiled, then took him in her arms, embracing him with warmth. His body sealed against her velvet skin. At the instant of contact it was over. He was done, spent, finished. His face burned like frostbite; his blood congealed. What must she think of him? He felt miserably ashamed, mortified, unutterably chagrined. He wished he could die on the spot.

Though devoid of sensitivity, her sexual appetites were flagrant, intense, consuming. Frantic and trembling, she held him tight and forced her tongue into his mouth. He struggled to free himself. She made a strange moaning sound and bit him on the lip. He thought she was trying to hurt him. "Don't!" he screamed in terror, striking her blindly.

She threw him aside and sprang to her feet, blazing with an idiot's rage at this greatest indignity to a whore. "God-dammit, I'll kill you!" she mouthed, clawing at his face.

He turned to escape and wrenched his back. Pain and terror gripped him in blind panic. "Oh!" he sobbed. "Oh! Please!"

She hung over him, her long, polished fingernails gleaming in the dim light like bloody talons. "You dirty freak! I oughta have you shot for hitting me. I'm not the kind you can hit!"

He raised his hands to ward her off. "I didn't—I'm not—I couldn't—" His mind groped dazedly for the words. "I mean I didn't mean to hit you. I just—it just happened. I thought you—"

She was partly mollified. "If you

wasn't a cripple I'd kill you. Get your clothes on and get out. If I told Billie you'd hit me she'd have you beat to death."

He fumbled with his clothes, trembling with shame and terror. In his haste he couldn't fasten anything. "I'm—I'm trying to hurry," he pleaded.

She lit a cigarette and sat on the bed and watched him, smoldering with rage. Her mouth was brutal and in her eyes was a look of animal stupidity. He was afraid to look at her. His broken arm was useless.

Finally he got up courage to say, "If you—if you help me dress I'll give you five dollars."

She relented and took the money. She helped him strap on his brace and tied his laces. He shuddered at her touch, looking away.

"You're a strange one," she said curiously. "What kind of kick is that?"

He didn't know what she meant. "Is what?"

"Is that all you ever do? Just—" she snapped her fingers—"and it's over."

He was ashamed to tell her but was afraid to keep silent. "I—I never did it before."

She stopped helping him. "Oh!" Then she sat down and laughed until tears came into her eyes.

He worked with his buttons frantically.

"Look, baby, you don't have to go. Mama'll show you what it's like."

"I got to go," he muttered desperately. "I got to go."

"You can spend the night, baby. You got to learn. And I'll be nice."

"No, I got to go. I can't stay."

"But you'll come back?"

"Yes, yes, I'll come back. But I got to go now."

"Don't go with any other girl now. Promise me."

"Yes, yes, I promise. But, please, I got to go."

He was crying inside from shame and desperation. She buttoned his clothes and went with him to the door. She kissed him in the dark. He was trembling all over. "Come back and see me, baby," she urged in a sensuous voice.

He ran down the stairs without looking back, and walked at a dizzy pace. His back ached unendurably. He shrank from the people he passed on the street. His chagrin became unbearable. He boarded a streetcar but couldn't sit still. At the next corner he alighted, walked over to Euclid and slunk into a movie.

An all-girl orchestra was playing:

*When day is done
And shadows fall . . .
I dream of you . . .*

His emotional turbulence quieted to a steady pulsation; his trembling slowly ceased. The picture came on and in the quiet darkness he devoured the youth and beauty of the heroine's face. His stare never left the soft, mobile mouth, the tender smile, the expressive eyes, and the thousand exquisite movements of the facial planes. For a time he was lost in his spell of adoration. Then the picture ended.

He returned to the street, forced to

face living people in this living world. He shrank from them as if he had leprosy. At last his thoughts caught up with him. Finally he admitted to himself that his accident had incapacitated him sexually. He felt that women could see it stamped on him. And the shame of having spent himself, his first experience, on such an ill-tempered prostitute made him, by the time he reached home, morbidly depressed.

His mother was waiting up for him. "Why must you stay out so late, son?"

He scolded was brackish and cutting. He hated her—God, if she knew how he hated her, he thought.

"You're not well yet and Mother worries so when you stay out so late."

"Godammit, let me alone!" he exploded.

She was shocked speechless, her old flaccid face falling into ruins.

He ran clumsily up the stairs and sat in the bathroom, sobbing bitterly. Finally he undressed and examined himself long and thoroughly. His back ached. Shame and fear combined in excruciating agony. He'd never be a man, he thought. And the shame of having revealed it to a senseless whore. How could he have done this to himself, gone to that den and bared his naked soul to a brutal prostitute? How could he have so debased himself?

For days he wouldn't leave the house. He felt his shame and inadequacy as visible as a torch. He kept everyone on edge. His mother went about with a tight, grim look, sick with anxiety, but still she refused to speak to him. He wouldn't apologize. She wouldn't forgive him. But finally the shame quieted to passive resignation. He rationalized by telling himself that all the fellows visited prostitutes. And when the sexual urge returned he became frantic again. Now his incapacity took precedence over his shame. He pored through all the textbooks on physiology in the house, seeking information about the sexual act. But he could find no information to help in his dilemma.

Finally he consulted his doctor. "I want to know if I can get married?"

The doctor was alarmed lest he'd made an oversight in his diagnosis. "I'm sure your accident didn't affect your spermatic cord. We found no evidence in our examination."

"It isn't that. I can't hold it." He felt his face burn.

The doctor laughed with relief, but the sight of the desperation in the youth's face sobered him. He explained that it was not uncommon. "There's nothing to worry about. If it happens again just wait for a resurgence. At your age it should come back within a half hour."

Charles felt juvenile and foolish but immensely relieved. Next day he drew fifty dollars from his account and visited Billie's early. He slept with Marge until midnight. They had whiskey and food brought to the room. He was ravenous but didn't drink because the whiskey made him sleepy. He paid her recklessly and she enjoyed lying lazily in bed, drinking, and being paid for it too,

and she made him feel competent. She had the body of a debauchee who seemed bursting with love, and her smooth, flawless skin against the pale blue sheets in the pink light had a warm, glowing tint. She was coarse and vulgar and much older than himself, and called him "Daddy" in the immemorial manner, but each time he gave himself he closed his eyes and imagined she was young and virginal and a beautiful princess from the land of dreams. He remained excited the whole time and there were moments when he felt almost completely recovered.

After that he spent much of his leisure time at Billie's. With Marge he was hidden and reassured at the same time. He confessed to her how frightened he'd been the first time when he'd believed he'd lost his sexual capacity. He told

THE LAST WHITE MAN (Continued from Page 53)

"You know Mrs. Johnson's washing shack, my mother's place?"

The place where she was shot. "That's gone too. Everything's gone. Here are the pictures, you can see for yourself."

The pictures were there to be held and looked at and thought about. The rocket was full of pictures and answers to questions. Any town, any building, any place.

Willie stood with the rope in his hands.

He was remembering Earth, the green Earth and the green town where he was born and raised, and he was thinking now of that town, gone to pieces, to ruin, blown up and scattered, all of the landmarks with it, all of the supposed or certain evil scattered with it, all of the hard men gone, the stables, the ironsmiths, the curio shops, the soda fountains, the gin mills, the river bridges, the lynching trees, the buckshot-covered hills, the roads, the cows, the mimosas, and his own house as well as those big-pillared houses down near the long river, those white mortuaries where the women as delicate as moths fluttered in the autumn light, distant, far away. Those houses where the cold men rocked, with glasses of drink in their hands, guns leaned against the porch newels, sniffing the autumn air and considering death. Gone, all gone; gone and never coming back. Now, for certain, all of that civilization ripped into confetti and strewn at their feet. Nothing, nothing of it left to hate—not an empty brass gun shell, or a twisted hemp, or a tree, or even a hill of it to hate. Nothing but some alien people in a rocket, people who might shine his shoes and ride in the back of trolleys or sit far up in midnight theaters. . . . "You won't have to do that," said Willie Johnson.

His wife glanced at his big hands. His fingers were opening.

The rope, released, fell and coiled upon itself along the ground.

They ran through the streets of their town and tore down the new signs so quickly made, and painted out the fresh yellow signs on streetcars, and they cut

her many things about himself he'd never told anyone before. Sealed in the strange room, safe from the hard, critical world, secure in her love, he could confess all his hurts and dreams, his fears and disappointments. She sipped her whiskey and pretended to listen, her thought on other things. And then he'd take her furiously.

"Daddy," she'd say with professional excitement. "My frantic little daddy. You just had to warm up."

And he thought she loved him. Afterwards he could walk down to dismal slum streets and look the critical, staring people in the face, feeling daring and manly because he'd slept with a whore. And if he could think of her as young and virginal, he could wink boldly at the young girls his own age, feeling gallant and experienced. ✓

down the ropes in the theater balconies, and unloaded their guns and stacked their ropes away.

"A new start for everyone," said Hattie, on the way home in their car.

"Yes," said Willie at last. "The Lord's let us come through, a few here and a few there. And what happens next is up to all of us. The time for being fools is over. We got to be something else except fools. I knew that when he talked. I knew then that now the white man as lonely as we've always been. He's got no home now, just like we didn't have one for so long. Now everything's even. We can start all over again, on the same level."

He stopped the car and sat in it, not moving, while Hattie went to let the children out. They ran down to see their father. "You see the white man? You see him?" they cried.

"Yes, sir," said Willie, sitting behind the wheel, rubbing his face with his slow fingers. "Seems like for the first time today I really seen the white man —I really seen him clear." ✓

\$300,000 BOSOM

(Continued from Page 21)

Ella Logan role of Sharon in the Washington, D. C., production of "Finian's Rainbow."

Her eye-catching upper facade stunned the owner of Berlin's classiest club, who offered her \$3,000 a week for three months, because "it will be the high spot of my career to have you wiggle on my floor."

When Ilene turned down the offer, this eager Teuton beaver wailed by cable: "Okay. Come over. Marry me. Take 50 per cent of the club's profits for life."

Ilene is not ready to do any marrying yet, but has her ideas of what she's shopping for. "Guess I'm really quite feminine under all this," Ilene sighs. "When the right guy comes along I'll be a sucker and chuck all this. I'd like him to be an intelligent, clean-cut colored man. He can be a garbage collector but if he happens to be a millionaire I won't let such a detail stand in the way of true love." ✓



"Nothing left on, so what can we play for now?"

of the walk groaned with the love-making of adolescent boys and girls. Ester snuggled closer. The intimate touch of her warm body close to his made him snap out of his moodiness, and soon they were sauntering along like newlyweds. As they passed the 154th Street Asher asked her:

"Wanta come in for a minute and see my place?"

"Remember, for a minute."

Asher lived in a three-story, brownstone private house that had been converted into a rooming house. From the reflection of the street lamp, they could see the large mirror paneled in heavy mahogany on the parlor floor. Inside, it was dark except for a tiny electric light which hung at the landing of the second floor. Asher took Ester by the hand and tiptoed up the linoleum-covered steps and into his room on the second floor.

It was a chicken-coop-like room, in the rear of the building. As she looked about her, Ester took off her jacket and flung it across a chair in front of the window. Crowded into the space were several odd pieces of furniture—a three-quarter bed, a dresser, and two straight-backed chairs, together with Asher's small, battered wardrobe trunk. Turning about, Ester looked at herself in the mirror. Seeing that the breeze had loosened her hair, she started to arrange it. Asher sat on the edge of the bed just behind her. She had removed only two or three hairpins, placing them on the dresser, when Asher took her by the waist and pulled her down on the bed beside him. He reached over and kissed her, but she withdrew quickly.

"Why did you do that?"

"You don't like it?"

She looked at him for a moment with a twinkle in her eyes, then she smiled.

"What's that got to do with it?"

He sat up straight on the side of the bed and faced her. She looked steadily into his eyes, and her large mouth trembled with a smile.

"Well?" she said.

"You know I could go for you in a big way."

"But you scarcely know me."

Asher took hold of her and drew her towards him. She did not resist, but bent forward a little, and he kissed her lips again. A tender look came into her eyes, and she began to stroke his head.

"Don't be silly. Can't we be just good friends?"

"Not the way you're patten' my cheek."

Ester laughed softly, but did not stop. Asher looked into her eyes, and as he looked he saw them soften and grow liquid. Then he pulled her toward him and they stretched across the bed. He kissed her again and her body folded into his. His hand caressed the flank of her leg. Then he began to fumble with the zipper of her dress. She sat up on the edge of the bed and slapped his hand.

"You're so clumsy," she said as she stood up and set about unfastening her dress. She slipped her dress over her

head and threw it across a chair. Then, putting her hands behind her, she unhooked her brassiere and stood before Asher in her panties. He caught her in his arms and kissed her, long and violently.

"Put the light out, Daddy."

Looka me, Asher said to himself. Wish they could see me now. Bet they'd call me Daddy-O now. I'm a big-timer. That's me . . . all me. That's what I am. A big shot. Just like they do it in the movies. Make 'em go wild. Like them there movie stars. Treat 'em cold . . . indifferent to 'em . . . mean. That makes 'em make you. Jesus, bet they do it in satin sheets . . . sho' would like to try it that way . . . I'll bet a man I'm Daddy-O now. They won't tell me 'bout no Monroe . . . nobody else.

It was a long time before they stirred. The grayness of dawn came upon the window shade—a speck in the center, then an outer rim of light framed the window shade, forcing out the dark areas.

Ester awakened Asher by kissing him on the mouth. Her hair falling over his face tickled him. "I better get out of here," she said. "I don't wanta meet your landlady this morning."

"Pay her no mind," he answered sleepily. "She's no trouble."

Ester sat on the edge of the bed and reached for her clothes lying in the chair by the window. Her waist was small but her hips were broad. As she bent forward her large, brown breasts lay heavily upon her thighs. As she began to dress herself hurriedly she yanked the bed sheet back from Asher.

"Wake up, lazy-bones," she said. "And I'll tell you something."

SUGAR BROWN

(Continued from page 56)

start drinking and crying about Pauline. The sun would be rising over the Hudson before he'd stop his crazy carryings on—making me drink with him and listen to the nights he'd spent with Pauline.

"I loved her, boy! She thought I was trying to buy her. Some black buck had to come along and cut me out. But I'm just as good a lover as that black boy any day."

And he would begin to boast about the women he could have—without money, too. (Wrong, of course.) But he sent me to Harlem to find Pauline.

I couldn't find her. She'd gone away with her boy-friend. Some said they went to Memphis. Some said Chicago. Some said Los Angeles. Anyway, she was gone—that kid who looked like an Alabama moon.

I told Mr. Lloyd she was gone, so we got drunk again. For more'n a week, he made no move to go to the office. I began to be worried, cutting so many classes, staying up all night to drink with the old man, and hanging around most of the day. But if I left him alone, he acted like a fool. I was scared. He'd take out women's pictures and beat 'em

"What?"

Ester looked at him with her heavy, sad expression. Slowly, Asher pulled himself up and sat in the center of the bed with his knees hunched up before him. "What?"

"You really interested?"

"What is this, some sort of a game?"

"I've got a little boy," she said slowly. "And I haven't time to waste on any man who's out to just play around."

Asher was speechless for several minutes. Ester looked intently into his face.

"Where?" he said, when words did come. "Livin' with you and Hattie?"

"Nope," she said with a low chuckle. "He's down South with my brother."

"Oh!"

A twinkle came into Ester's eyes as she watched Asher slowly turning over in his mind what she had told him.

"You know it's loads of fun goin' out with you," she said after a while. "Let's keep it like that. We can't afford to get serious." She paused, then continued: "You know everybody says I'm out husband-hunting."

"Where's your old man?"

"That bastard? Running around somewhere in Harlem."

Asher pushed the sheet to one side and one leg slid over the edge of the bed.

"Don't get up," she said. "I can get home all right."

"Wait a minute!" Asher started to say. But suddenly she was at the door. He stood up. But she went out and pulled the door gently behind her. He heard her tiptoe hurriedly down the stairs.

He sat on the edge of the bed and thought of what the waiters had said—that Ester was looking for big fish to fry. And he was like a man wondering whether or not he had been short-changed. ✓

and stamp on 'em and then make love to 'em and tear 'em up. Wouldn't eat. Didn't want to see anybody.

Then, one night, I knew he was crazy—so it was all up. He grabs the door like it was a woman, and starts to kiss it. I couldn't make him stop pawing at the door, so I telephoned his chauffeur. The chauffeur calls up one of Mr. Lloyd's broker friends. And they take him to the hospital.

That was last April. They've had him in the sanitarium ever since. The apartment's closed. His stuff's in storage, and I have no more job than a snake's got hips. Anyway, I went through college on it, but I don't know how the hell I'll get to dental school. I just wrote Ma down in Atlanta and told her times was hard. There ain't many Mr. Lloyds.

The chauffeur told me yesterday he's crazy as a loon now. Sometimes he thinks he's a stud-horse chasing a mare. Sometimes he's a lion. Poor man, in a padded cell! He was a swell guy when he had his right mind. But a yellow woman sure did drive him crazy. For me, well, it's just a good job gone!

Say, boy, gimme a smoke, will you? I hate to talk about it. ✓

TITAN OF THE TALK TRADE (Continued from Page 58)

cago colored person is trying to get away from racial stereotypes which they say Benson perpetuates on a public medium, the radio. "He doesn't give a damn what he says or how he says it," a well-to-do physician observes, "just so long as he keeps getting richer off these poor, ignorant sharecroppers from the South."

Some listeners tune him in merely to laugh at the way he sounds announcing "Sulphur 8" one of his biggest sponsors. Benson, they say, tells them to buy "Suffer 8 faw yoah hair."

Generally, the majority of Benson's detractors complain that they don't know "what the hell he's saying," when he delivers his commercials or announces his musical selections. For even today Benson has failed to rid himself of the syrupy, guttural accents of his Mississippi Delta country heritage. But he shrugs off complaints of his "colossal ignorance of good English" and snide remarks that he is the man who "made bad English pay off like a dollar slot machine."

Benson knows the habits and inclinations of his listeners and throws all other considerations out the window to "give it to 'em the way they like it."

Undeniably Benson is an idol worshipped by thousands of the so-called "low class sharecropper Negroes" from the Deep South. To them he is symbolic, representing in their thinking the same status that the colored preacher did in earlier migrations from South to North. He was one of them who had gone North and made good but hadn't "forgot where he come from nor the folks who he'pped him git where he is."

Benson is the man who tells them what bread to buy, what beer to drink, what restaurant to patronize and where they can borrow money "on your signature only." He is their intercessor with the furniture dealer and the auto finance company. As such his commercial success is guaranteed.

It was first in 1948 that Benson stunned the radio world by running away with a disc jockey popularity poll conducted by the Chicago Tribune. To the amazement of network executives, who until then had taken a dim view of Negro announcers, Benson topped his nearest competitor, a white deejay named Ernie Simon, by 9,566 votes.

"It was really Al Benson who was most responsible for the big boom in radio for Negro disc jockeys," says Leonard Evans of Chicago, who is head of the award-winning National Negro Network. "He came along during World War II in a transition period that saw millions of southern Negroes being moved about the country. Of all the disc jockeys in Chicago, Benson best understood these migrants and how to get to them."

Once the doors were opened, colored disc jockeys proved from the start to be naturally mated with radio announcing. They knew without being taught how to make with the right words, to

bridge the awkward gaps in the spiel, whether in delivery of the commercial or "getting familiar" with the lonesome housewife in her kitchen trying to finish her ironing before the kids tramped in from school. They proved old hands at "romancing" womenfolk who most influence radio buying. A jealous Detroit auto plant worker, the husband of a 22-year-old beauty contest winner, said he didn't know who to be more afraid of, his wife's former boy friends or "that damned jive-talking disc jockey she listens to all day and has never met."

By far the greatest audience was commanded by the announcers, who aping Benson, chattered in the jive chatter of Harlem's busy sidewalk jungles. Here, it was proved, was the biggest area of audience response. Although such talk is often plain, almost uncomprehensible gibberish, there is a distinctive rhythmic swing to it that often pleases ears not accustomed to listening very long to more erudite talk.

Al Benson became the first to break with precedent and so-called "musical etiquette" by putting on the air records by such blues shooters as the Howling Wolf, Muddy Waters, Big Mama Willa Thornton, Sunnyland Slim and Big Joe Turner. He mixed them up with a lot of little known gospel singers such as the Five Blind Boys, the Mississippi Earth to Heaven Singers and Brother Joe May to command an even wider listening audience.

Rival disc jockeys scorned all this, terming it "gutter stuff." But they were forced into playing such songs because not only Negroes but white listeners also found this music from the Dixie "pigs-trails" had the strong, rough, sensuous beat they all liked. Soon even white deejays began playing this type record and are still doing so.

By 1949, Al Benson had become the biggest Negro name in radio and at the peak of this popularity, earned an estimated \$125,000 in one year. His earnings today are proportionately high with revenue coming in from a record company he owns, an advertising agency and assorted other enterprises.

Benson, who left his native Jackson, Miss., in 1925 to go to Chicago, happened to be in the right town at the right time and in the right place. After jobs as a printing plant checker, dining car cook and a period when he pastored a storefront church, he talked his way onto a radio station payroll as an announcer. By 1948, he had programs on two stations, WJJD and WGES, his present affiliation.

After his 1948 popularity poll triumph, Benson moved easily into the winner's circle as "Mayor of Bronzeville," a mythical honorary title given out each year to the winner of a contest sponsored by the weekly Chicago Defender. Even his worst foes agreed that the six-foot two-inch 200-pounder from Mississippi was the biggest noise on the radio. He began deliberately exagger-

ating his deficiencies in speech, exploited them to his own advantage as fresh listeners joined the growing army of Benson-conscious Chicagoans.

"Benson's the biggest Negro in Chicago," deejay Willie Bryant reported to Harlem pals upon his return from a visit to the Windy City in 1949. "He's so rich," said Willie, "he doesn't have time to count his money and he's about the only Negro out there that I found who could fix a traffic ticket."

Growing apace with Benson now was a new awareness among radio moguls of the sorely-neglected Negro market. They began devoting more and more program time to attract colored buyers for products hawked over their station. Impressed by the tremendous selling job Negro deejays were doing following on heels of the example set in Chicago by Benson, one Memphis executive said: "Ten years ago we had no idea what the Negro market was. We were aware, of course, that some Negroes did buy expensive automobiles, all of them purchased food, paid rent and occasionally bought furs, but not on the colossal scale as has been revealed to us by our colored announcers."

Today more and more stations are tearing up old schedules and revamping them to include more time for Negro programs. WBCO in Bessemer, Ala., for instance, devotes 122 hours out of 123 a week to Negro shows. WEDR in Birmingham gives Negroes 84 out of 84 hours of air time. KWBR in Oakland, Calif., devoted 101 hours of 156 to colored entertainment; KSN in nearby San Francisco programs 132 hours out of 140; WOOL in Washington, D.C., has 126 out of 126 hours given to colored shows.

Today Al Benson has outgrown his humble start in radio and the "Old Swingmaster," as he loves to call himself, is heard Monday through Saturday afternoons with the money pouring in from national to local sponsors whose merchandise ranges from furs and Cadillacs to Coca-Cola and chewing gum.

He lives in his own 11-room two-story air-conditioned brick house on Chicago's teeming Southeast side. Outside his dwelling an indication of the weight he packs with city and state authorities is seen in the "No Parking, City Ordinance" signs prominently posted in front of the place.

A visitor to the Benson layout remarked upon entry into the completely-carpeted house, "Peace, radio must be truly wonderful." On all sides are visible evidences of radio's contribution to Benson's opulence. You see it in the long basement bar with the two heavy slot machines for quarter gamblers sitting at each end. Another door leads into the rumpus room for broadcasting, rehearsals, recording and after 4 a.m. parties and blowouts for his friends.

You take a look into a pantry off this playroom where Benson has stored enough food to feed a dozen people for weeks in case of an enemy air attack. The shelves are packed with canned pheasant, turtle meat, grouse and other

delicacies. "I've got my own bomb shelter down here," he says off-handedly. "And it's a comfortable one."

He has twin black French poodles and two pianos, a spinet in the rumpus room and a parlor grand in the living room. At one side stands an expensive-looking set of chrome-plated vibras-phones that might excite Lionel Hampton to envy. "He plays on them when he's here as my guest," Benson says casually.

But Benson's biggest pride is his four closets stuffed to capacity with a wardrobe of 150 suits, all hand-tailored, 50 overcoats, more than 100 pairs of shoes and dresser drawers jammed with neckties, socks and a shirt supply large enough to outfit a Mexican army division.

"It would take a week, 24 hours around the clock, just changing my clothes from inside out," he says not without humor, "and I'd never get into all the goddam glad rags I've got here."

His cleaning bill runs about \$150 weekly, you are told.

"My suits cost me from \$100 to \$150 each," he says without bragging, "and I buy several new ones a month."

For all of his success, Benson is one deejay who believes in "getting among the people." He does it by making frequent in-person appearances (for which he is well paid). A year ago at the height of the national hysteria generated by the lynching in Mississippi of teenager Emmett Till, he chartered a private plane and had tons of pro-civil rights pamphlets dropped over Jackson and other Mississippi strongholds of race hate.

AUGUST AFTERNOON *(Continued from Page 44)*

"Where's the spring?"

"Just across the field in the grove."

"All right," Floyd said, standing up. "Let's go."

He bent down and pulled the knife out of the wood. Willie ran down the steps and across the yard. When Floyd saw that she was not going to wait for him, he ran after her, holding the knives in his pocket with one hand. She led him across the cotton field to the spring in the pine grove. Just before they got there, Floyd caught her by the arm and ran beside her the rest of the way.

"Boss," Hubert said, "we ain't aiming to have no trouble today, is we?"

Vic cursed him.

"I don't want to get messed up with a heap of trouble and maybe get my belly slit open with that big hairy knife. If you ain't got objections, I reckon I'll mosey on home now and cut me a little firewood for the cook-stove."

"Come back here!" Vic said. "You stay where you are and stop making moves to go off."

"What is we aiming to do, Mr. Vic?"

Vic eased himself off the porch and walked across the yard to the water oak. He looked down at the ground where Floyd had been sitting, and then he looked at the porch steps where Willie had been. The noonday heat beat down through the thin leaves overhead and he could feel his mouth and throat burn with the hot air he breathed.

Benson is one of two famous colored expatriates from Jackson, Mississippi. The other: Richard Wright. He became world famous as a novelist. And he was a school classmate of Arthur Leaner in their hogwash and cornmeal mush days back home. Benson never speaks of Wright, whose earnings off his first book, "Native Son," made him a rich man. But Wright, now living permanently in Paris, has made no bones about expressing his dislike of Benson.

When Benson was Mayor of Bronzeville, Wright wrote a friend: "And you tell me of Arthur Leaner . . . Sure fits him to a T. I just had a hunch he'd turn out that way; he just had to be a fraud, no matter what. Would you believe that he had many, many chances to be and do something else? It seems that some people are just fated to want to do what is wrong and lousy and he is one of them. I predict that he will go far in his fraud, will make a lot of money out of it."

Wright then rather anxiously wanted to know what Benson thought of him. "I wonder," he asked rather plaintively, "if he reads anything I've ever written? Or would he think that I'm working a racket like he is? I imagine that Leaner is tricky as a snake, tricky as only a nigger from Jackson, Miss., can be tricky!"

Told of the letter, Benson sat quietly for a moment, chain-smoked another cigarette and then said: "He must be pretty lonesome over there in Paris with all those white folks. He was scared as hell of 'em back home."

"Have you got a gun, Hubert?"

"No, sir, boss," Hubert said.

"Why haven't you?" he said. "Right when I need a gun, you haven't got it. Why don't you keep a gun?"

"Mr. Vic, I ain't got no use for a gun. I used to keep one to shoot rabbits and squirrels with, but I got to thinking hard one day, and I traded it off the first chance I got. I reckon it was a good thing I traded, too. If I had kept it, you'd be asking for it like you did just now."

Vic went back to the porch and picked up the steelyard and hammered the porch with it. After he had hit the porch four or five times, he dropped it and started out in the direction of the spring. He walked as far as the edge of the shade and stopped. He stood listening for a while.

Willie and Floyd could be heard down near the spring. Floyd said something to Willie, and Willie laughed loudly. There was silence again for several minutes, and then Willie laughed again. Vic could not tell whether she was crying or laughing. He was getting ready to turn and go back to the porch when he heard her cry out. It sounded like a shriek, but it wasn't that, either; it sounded more like someone laughing and crying simultaneously.

"Where did Miss Willie come from, Mr. Vic?" Hubert asked. "Where did you bring her from?"

"Down below here a little way," he said.

Hubert listened to the sounds that were coming from the pine grove.

"Boss," he said after a little while, "it appears to me like you didn't go far enough away."

"I went far enough," Vic said. "If I had gone any farther, I'd have been in Florida."

The colored man hunched his shoulders forward several times while he smoothed the white sand with his broad-soled shoes.

"Mr. Vic, if I was you, the next time I'd surely go that far, maybe farther."

"What do you mean, the next time?"

"I was figuring that maybe you wouldn't be keeping her much longer than now, Mr. Vic."

Vic cursed him.

Hubert raised his head several times and attempted to see down into the pine grove over the top of the growing cotton.

"Shut up and mind your own business," Vic said. "I'm going to keep her till the cows come home. Where else do you reckon I'd find a better-looking girl than Willie?"

"I wasn't thinking of how she looks—I was thinking of how she acts. That white man came here and sat down and it wasn't no time before she had his pecker up."

"She acts that way because she ain't old enough yet to know who to fool with. She'll catch on in time."

Hubert followed Vic across the yard. While Vic went towards the porch, Hubert stopped and leaned against the water oak where he could almost see over the cotton field into the pine grove. Vic went up on the porch and stretched out on the quilt. He took off his shoes and flung them aside.

"I surely God knowed something was going to happen when he whittled that stick down to nothing," Hubert was saying to himself. "White-folks take a long time to whittle a little piece of wood, but when they whittle it down to nothing, they're going to be up and doing before the time ain't long."

Presently Vic sat upright on the quilt.

"Listen here, Hubert—"

"Yes, sir, boss."

"You keep your eye on that stilleryd so it will stay right where it is now, and when they come back up the path, you wake me up in a hurry."

"Yes, sir," Hubert said. "Are you aiming to take a little nap now?"

"Yes, I am. And if you don't wake me up when they come back, I'll break your neck for you when I do wake up."

Vic lay down again on the quilt and turned over on his side to shut out the blinding glare of the early afternoon sun that was reflected upon the porch.

Hubert scratched his head and sat down against the water oak, facing the path from the spring. He could hear Vic snoring on the porch above the sounds that came at intervals from the pine grove across the field. He sat staring down the path, drowsy, singing under his breath. It was a long time until sundown.

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